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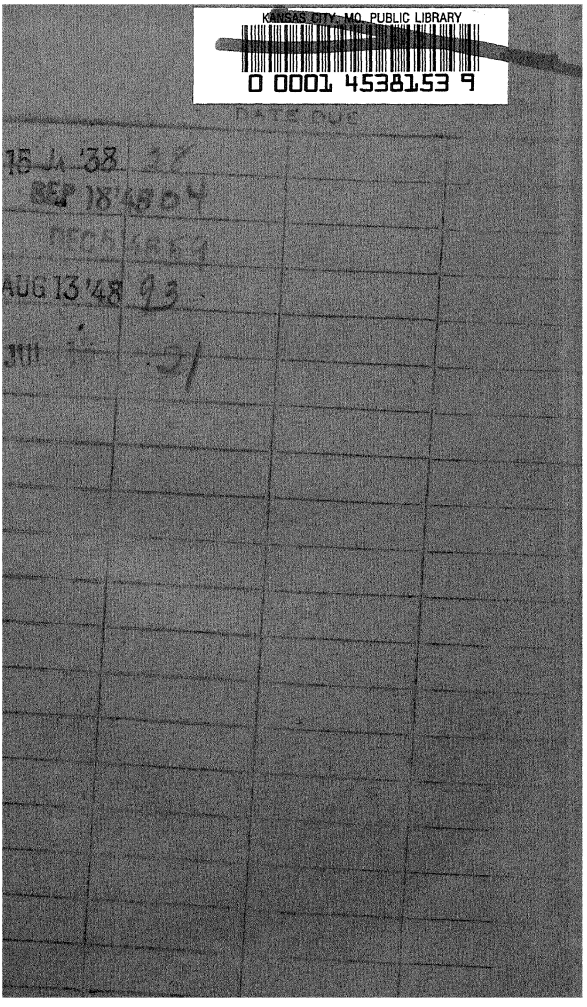
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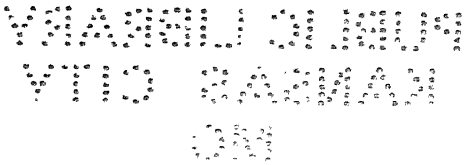

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See page 81

THE COBBLER-POET AMONG HIS BOOKS

The Master-singers of Nuremberg

(Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg)

A · DRAMATIC · POEM · BY · RICHARD WAGNER · FREELY · TRANSLATED · IN POETIC · NARRATIVE · FORM · BY

Oliver Huckel

Thomas Y. Crowell Company
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TO TWO NOBLE WOMEN
OF GERMAN BLOOD
MARIA SUSANNAH UHLE
OF HEILBRONN IN
THE OLD DUKEDOM OF WÜRTTEMBERG
AND
JULIA WALDEGRAVE
NIECE OF THE EARL OF WALDEGRAVE
OF ENGLAND
WHO BY
THEIR MEMORIES AND NOBLE TRADITIONS
HAVE INSPIRED IN THEIR DESCENDANT
A LOVE OF
THE QUAINT AND HAPPY-HEARTED
MASTER-SINGERS

O. H.

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FOREWORD

HE Master-singers of Nuremberg is Wagner's humorous opera. It is a refreshing contrast to the high tragedy of his sublime national epic of the Nibelungen Ring, and of the scarcely less tragic Lohengrin, Tannhäuser, and Parsifal. It is a picturesque episode, giving the spirit of the Middle Ages in admirable way.

This drama occupied Wagner's thoughts more or less for twenty-five years, and was finally completed in 1867 after several of his greater dramas had been finished and made public. It was given its first hearing in 1868, at Munich, under the direction of Hans von Bülow.

The Master-singers, it must be remembered, were not invented by Wagner. They were a real guild of old Nuremberg singers, men of flesh and blood, a product of that intensely artistic centre in mediaeval Germany. His sketching of these ancient worthies is absolutely accurate and realistic. Wagner intended it as a satire on the narrowness of a mechanical art-spirit; but it became a most gentle satire and an exquisitely pleasant and artistic portrayal of the life and times of the picturesque city.

Hans Sachs, the cobbler, one of the chief characters of the drama, was a well-known personage in the life of Nuremberg, and he is portrayed with consummate skill, tenderness and grace.

The music-drama of The Master-singers is a happy comment on the thought that art is progressive and that genius cannot be hampered

by petty rule. It shows up in kindliest fashion the absurdity of pedantry and convention. And its grand climax is the assured victory of real genius.

The real Master-singers were interesting. These artisan-poets of Germany were somewhat different from the Minnesingers, who were more akin to the troubadours of France. The Master-singers were in a certain sense the outcome of the Minnesingers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The Minnesingers were mostly of noble birth, and lived in kings' courts or wandered from castle to castle in the age of chivalry and the Crusades. Heinrich von Meissen, surnamed Frauenlobe, was a Minnesinger who was generally regarded as the founder of the schools and guilds of the Master-singers. The Master-singers belonged to the burgher and artisan class.

There was a guild of Master-singers at Mayence on the Rhine as early as 1311. The practice of rhyme-making became exceedingly popular. Guilds were formed in other cities and towns throughout Germany. The golden age of the guilds was about the time of the Lutheran Reformation. It was at Nuremberg, however, and in the time of Hans Sachs (1494-1575), that the unique craft seems to have come to its highest perfection. All classes of citizens were eligible for these singing guilds or corporations. Tailors, merchants, blacksmiths, weavers, shoemakers, town clerks, doctors and schoolmasters were all seized with the mania for making verses. The guilds held their

regular meetings, at which they frankly criticised each other's productions. As one historian tells: "They composed their verses in conformity with certain strict guild rules. Accuracy, industry and painstaking care, rather than an unfettered expression of the true spirit of poetry, were the main features of the Mastersinger's art." Among the specific faults that were to be guarded against were long lines, a key beyond the register of the voice, clouded meaning, unsingable phrases, word-clippings, faulty rhymes and words of double meaning. Tones denoted the scheme of versification; modes referred to the melodies that were sung. The singing at the guild meetings was of two kinds, free singing and principal singing; in the former, any one, even a stranger, might take part; the latter was competitive. The faults against the rules were noted on a slate by a marker. Seven faults were allowed, but if more than this number were made, the candidate was declared "outsung and outdone." After an apprenticeship, the members of the Guild were thus classified: One who had only partially mastered the rules was called a scholar; after he had completely mastered the rules he was a schoolman; if he could sing some half-dozen tunes in thorough accordance with the rules, he was a singer. He who could make verses to a given tune was a poet; and the final rank of Master was given to one who could invent a new scheme of verse and a new tune, and render it with not more than seven infractions of the established rules of the Guild. Christo-

pher Weigenseil of Altdorf, in his document of 1697, defines the parts of a Master-song as follows: "Every Master-singer's Song, or Bar, has a regular measure. A Bar most frequently consists of various strophes, but usually two. A Strophe is usually composed of two or more Stollen or stanzas, which are sung to the same melody. A Stole or stanza is composed of a certain number of verses or couplets, the end of which is indicated by a cross. Then comes the Abgesang, or after-song, or envoy. It also consists of a certain number of verses, which, however, are sung to another melody." In this present version some liberties are taken with the structures and metres of the songs in order to give them a more acceptable English setting. But the general division and the main thought are closely adhered to, even in the free translations of the lyrics, which are unusually numerous in this opera.

The various characters mentioned in the drama, such as Pogner, Kothner, Zorn, Nachtigal, Beckmesser, and the others, have their names recorded in the interesting historical document mentioned above. It was from this learned volume that Wagner gained much of his information about the old Master-singers and their tournaments, the odd names of the various modes, the rules of tablature, and other quaint methods of their work.

In order to show how industrious such a Master-singer could be, we may note the actual record of the cobbler-poet, Hans Sachs. He wrote

no fewer than six thousand and forty-eight works, longer or shorter, and of these four thousand and seventy-five are entitled Meister-lieder or Master-songs.

Those who desire further information concerning the Minnesingers and the Master-singers may find very readable chapters in Professor James K. Hosmer's "Short History of German Literature."

It is also most interesting to find that the craft of the Master-singers did not actually become extinct until very recently. As late as 1830, twelve old Master-singers held regular meetings in a little inn at Ulm, their society dating back to these mediaeval times. By 1839, the number had dwindled to four, and the quartette solemnly decided that "the society of Master-singers be disbanded forever." The last survivor of this ancient guild died in 1876.

The chief characters in Wagner's drama of The Master-singers are very distinctive types. The foremost of course is Hans Sachs, the cobbler-poet, full of kindness, integrity and good sense. Wagner has evidently idealized him from the data of the actual historical personage, for it seems scarcely believable that a cobbler could have been the philosopher, poet, artist, commoner and genial romanticist that Hans Sachs is made to appear in Wagner's portraiture; yet it is true to the spirit of the man, and many incidents as given are founded on fact. For instance, it is well known in the life of the real Hans Sachs, that when past middle age he was

attracted by a very young girl whom he married, and that he lived happily with her to the end of his life.

Another principal character, Sixtus Beckmesser, is the antithesis of Hans Sachs. Wagner has combined in this one unique character the features not only of the historic Beckmesser, but of three other markers, in order to make this ill-natured buffoon. He is pompous, crabbed and grotesque; a ridiculous and malicious pedant; a prosy old traditionalist, selfish and unattractive. Master Pogner, the goldsmith, is a fine type of the good and honest citizen, who is at the same time a noble devotee of Art, and thinks it a sublime idea to offer his daughter on the very shrine of Art itself. David is a typical apprentice; Magdalena a wise and faithful servant; while Walter and Eva are splendid exponents of youth and beauty, poetry and enthusiasm.

The satire, as we said, is a most gentle one. The Master-singers were not in the least grotesque to themselves. They took themselves most seriously, and they were taken seriously by the German people. The work of verse-making was with them not a pleasant pastime, nor an unusual inspiration, but a legitimate work and a wholesome occupation, a fine outlet, both for their nobler sentiment and their deeper religious spirit. They felt that they could be about no more helpful and holy business than their devotion to Art in the spirit of Religion.

The humor and emotion of the drama are all thoroughly German. It is full of folk-lore and

folk-humor, — a sort of rude, Gothic humor, — and the music is gay and light-hearted in character, in perfect harmony with the numerous jests and the tender emotions of the drama.

Wagner has told us in a pamphlet entitled "A Communication to my Friends," published in 1851, the circumstances which led to the choice of The Master-singers as a subject for an opera: "As among the Athenians of old a tragedy was followed by a merry satirical piece, there suddenly appeared to me during this journey for my health, the picture of a comic play, which might suitably be made to serve as a satirical supplement for my 'Battle of the Bards at the Wartburg,' or Tannhäuser. This was 'Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg,' with Hans Sachs at their head. I conceived Hans Sachs as the last example of the artistically productive folk-spirit. And in his relation I opposed him to the narrow-mindedness of Master-singer-like Burgherdom, to the extremely droll and tabulatur-poetical pedantry of which I gave a personal expression in the character of the Marker." It was soon after Wagner had finished Tannhäuser, and while he was at Marienbad in 1844, that he sketched out the poem of The Master-singers. One writer asserts that "the notion of Wagner writing a homely comic opera seems almost as incongruous as for the author of Don Quixote to write a Bible commentary. It is the very last thing we should suspect Wagner of doing." But Wagner wrote it, and he did it most effectively. He meant this drama to be an essentially popular opera,

founded on the simplest materials, and a work which any one could easily understand. He meant it as a demonstration to those who thought that he was visionary and transcendental, and could not work in homely and popular themes.

He worked on The Master-singers during many years,—years of bitter struggle with fate and finances,—even the years when he had almost decided to abandon music as a profession and seek his bread in India as a tutor. But finally King Ludwig of Bavaria provided him with a villa and a substantial allowance, and the musical composition of his drama went on rather more favorably. The first performance was given in 1868, at Munich, and scored a great success from the start. The first London performance did not take place until May, 1882.

Some have contended that Wagner has largely portrayed himself in the character of Walter; that in fact it is a piece of literary and musical autobiography. But this cannot be confirmed by any words that he has ever said concerning it, by letter or otherwise. Yet we can readily agree that the composer, as one critic asserts, "really designed Walter to represent, like himself, the spirit of progress in music, while in the Mastersingers themselves he embodies the spirit of pure pedantry. These two powers," asserts this critic, "have always been at war in the world of art and always will. Theoreticians and critics publish rules which they deduce from the practice of the great artists. The next

original genius who arrives has something new to say, and says it in a new way. Wagner in The Mastersingers has shown us the spirit of progress in its jubilant youth, scoffing at the established rules. One of the earliest lessons of the symbolic comedy of The Mastersingers is that a musician, or any other artist, must first master what has already been learned of his art before he can advance beyond it." But the greater lesson of the drama is manifestly that real genius cannot be bound by pedantic rules, and seeks constantly a newer and freer utterance.

The setting of the drama of The Master-singers is the most charming that can be imagined. Beautiful quaint old Nuremberg in its golden days of prosperity and art; the fine old church of St. Catherine; the narrow, picturesque streets and artistic gabled houses; the charming costumes of the burghers of that period and the delicate mingling of art and humor and religion give an indescribable charm. It conjures up the romantic days of long ago in these streets once trod by Albrecht Dürer and Hans Sachs. We recall Longfellow's fine poem on Nuremberg:

Quaint old town of toil and traffic, quaint old
town of art and song,
Memories haunt thy pointed gables, like the
rooks that round them throng.

Everywhere I see around me, rise the wondrous
world of art,

Fountains wrought with richest sculpture, standing in the common mart.

Here when Art was still religion, with a simple, reverent heart
Lived and labored Albrecht Dürer, the evangelist of Art.

Fairer seems the ancient city, and the sunshine seems more fair
That he once has trod its pavement, that he once has breathed its air.

Through these streets so broad and stately, these obscure and dismal lanes,
Walked of yore the Master-singers, chanting rude poetic strains.

From remote and sunless suburbs came they to the friendly guild,
Building nests in fame's great temple, as in spouts the swallows build.

As the weaver plied the shuttle, wove he too the mystic rhyme,
And the smith his iron measure hammered with the anvil's chime.

Thanking God whose boundless wisdom makes the flowers of poesy bloom,
In the forges' dust and cinders, in the tissues of the loom.

Here Hans Sachs, the cobbler-poet, laureate of the gentle craft,
Wisest of the Twelve Wise Masters, in huge folios sang and laughed.

Vanished is the ancient splendor and before my dreamy eye,
Wave these mingled shapes and figures, like a faded tapestry.

Not thy councils, not thy Kaisers, win for thee the world's regard,
But the painter, Albrecht Dürer, and Hans Sachs, thy cobbler-bard.

The music of The Master-singers, with which we have little to do in this volume (for we are emphasizing the literary side of the drama), is nevertheless a marvel of composition. Its character is light and brilliant, full of sweetness and tenderness, although at times majestic with beauty and solemnity. The motifs are distinctive and significant, and follow the principal characters and epochs. Wagner used some of the actual melodies created by the ancient Master-singers, and of course adds many new ones. There are many unusually quaint and grotesque features of the music, especially with the bassoons,—"those clowns of the orchestra." The melody of the Prize-song is one of the most exquisite and unforgettable of Wagner's great musical inspirations.

As far as we have been able to learn, there has been no adequate translation of The Master-

singers into English. The usual librettos are far from satisfactory on the literary side. The present version follows the general style of the previous volumes on Parsifal, Lohengrin, Tannhäuser and the Nibelungen Ring series, putting the story into the narrative rather than the purely dramatic form. The style and phrasing, however, of the Tennysonian Idylls has not been attempted, but a much more simple and less ornate manner, as homely and quaint as the original drama itself. The aim has been to give in this narrative a faithful translation of all conversations, speeches and lyrics, with a free description of the scenery and action which in the drama may be indicated only by the briefest stage directions. The scenic portrayals as here given follow closely the splendid renditions of the drama at the Prinz-Regenten Theatre at Munich, together with some vivid impressions through attendance at modern Sängerfests. Long sojourns in Nuremberg and Rothenberg have also helped in the attempt to reproduce the mediaeval German atmosphere.

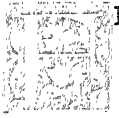
The translator of this present version acknowledges much assistance during his student days in German literature from Professor Eric Schmidt at Berlin.

OLIVER HUCKEL

July, 1912

PART I: THE SINGING GUILD

THE SINGING GUILD



EAST of St. John, and vigil of the feast,—
A quiet evening in the sunset glow
That streams through painted windows, lighting up
The faces of a thousand sculptured saints.
Church of St. Catherine in Nuremberg,—
A gem of Gothic glory, dreamed of old
By architects and craftsmen who had eyes
That saw the vision of the Heavenly City,
And sought to reproduce its tenderness
And sweetness in the beauty of all life.
Fair Nuremberg, quaintest of German cities,
High pointed roofs and gables picturesque,
Rarest cathedrals and enchanting fountains,
Dreams of old bridges, castles many-towered,
And many-gated walls encircling all.
Fair Nuremberg of artists, poets, singers,—
A glorious company of glorious souls,—
Who lived for beauty in the market-place,
And beauty in the church and every home,
And beauty in all life and every heart.
Look now into the dimly lighted church
And see the worshippers, the massive nave,
And the resplendent glory in the gloom.
And listen, as the many voices rise
In an enraptured chorale of high praise,
Lauding the name and fame of John the Baptist,
Forerunner of the Saviour,—prophet-saint,
Fiery and stern, for whom the day is kept.
The massive organ rolls its thunderous praise
Up to the lofty roof, as swells the hymn:

"WHEN to thee the Saviour came
To be baptized in God's dear name,
'T was a new and saving sign
Of the sacrifice divine.
So by baptism may we prove
Worthy of His death and love!
Noble pleader,
Christ's preceder!
Waft us gently o'er
To the Jordan shore!"

Now while the hymn was soaring high to heaven
There came an interlude of human love.
In the last pew was Eva, sweet as Spring,
Breathing the perfumed breath of Paradise,
Fairer than angel of the sculptured hosts,—
The noblest maiden of all Nuremberg,
Daughter of great Veit Pogner, citizen
Of high renown, goldsmith and counsellor,
Most wealthy and most honorable man;
His daughter, fairest jewel, purest gold
And richest treasure of his heart and life;
And at her side her good nurse Magdalena,
The wise companion of her unfolding years.

Against a near-by pillar leaned a youth,
A brave Franconian knight of growing fame,
Walter von Stolzing. And his face
Showed nobleness, with strength and dauntless valor.
But little of the service did he note:
Long had he gazed at Eva from afar,
In that sweet hour of worship, for his heart
Was hers from the first hour of yesterday

When he had met her in her father's house.
Now he drew nigh with glances of fond love,
And looks of mute but eloquent appeal,
With tenderest entreaty and devotion,
While her fair eyes answered him modestly,
But with such timid sweetness in response,
Such glowing kindness, as meant radiant hope
To the fond heart that waited for a sign.
Yea, more than once their eyes spoke messages,
When Magdalena turned and suddenly
Ceased the high strain of song upon her lips,
And nudged her maiden charge reprovingly
For showing even by the faintest sign
An indiscretion in her guilelessness,
Here in the presence of the handsome stranger.

Now the hymn ended, and the organ played
A long-drawn prelude like a sad farewell.
The people from the portal wended forth,
And the young knight advanced his way to Eva,
Who from her seat had walked far down the aisle.
Softly he spake, but ardently: "O stay!
One word! I do entreat thee! Stay and hear!"
And Eva quickly spake to Magdalena:
"My kerchief, pray! 'T is yonder in the pew!"
And Magdalena turned with chiding lips:
"Forgetful child! Easier lost than found!"
And wended her slow way to the far pew.
Then Walter spake: "Forgive, if bold I seem;
One thing I long to know, and feign must ask,
Whatever rules I break in this attempt, —

'T is life or death with me, 't is bliss or woe;
With one fair word your answer may be clothed.
O tell me, loveliest maid,—"
Here Magdalena came,
The kerchief in her hand, and spake: "'T is found!"
But Eva with her quickened woman's wit
Cried out: "Alack, my brooch!" And Magdalena asked:
"Where was it lost?" And back she turned her steps,
Retracing slow the churchly aisle they trod.
Then Walter, taking up the thread of his discourse,
Asked, eager: "Shall my fate be light and joy,
Or endless night and the oblivious grave?
Shall I obtain my heart's most fond desire,
Or must I hear the dismal doom of death?
Fair maiden, speak!—"
But Magdalena came,
Breaking upon them once again, and said:
"Here is the brooch, and both the lost are found!"
But Eva started, and dismayed cried out:
"O woe is me, my hymn book now is gone!"
And once again the footsteps were retraced.
Then Walter quickly spake: "That one dear word,
Wilt thou not speak to me,—that syllable of fate?
I do beseech thee, speak what I must know—
Fair maiden, say, art thou a bride betrothed?"
And Magdalena once again returned,
Now greeting Walter with a curtsey quaint,

WALTER AND EVA AT ST. CATHERINE'S

And speaking gratitude for his great kindness
In looking to her charge while she was gone:
"Your servant, fair sir knight, 't is honor, sir,
To have such noble escort by our side,
Again would you our Master Pogner seek?"
But deep in anxious doubt, deploring sore
His fatal visit there, Walter bewailed:
"Would that his house I never had beheld!"
And Magdalena asked in deep surprise:
"Heyday, sir, wherefore such strange words as these?
When first thou camest to fair Nuremberg,
Wert thou not welcomed there as honored guest?
He gave thee heart and hand, and cake and wine,
And open house,—hast thou no thanks for these?"
Fair Eva, breaking in, exclaimed with haste:
"Good Lena, nay, he did not mean it thus!
Downcast he is because he longs to know,—
What shall I say,—I scarce can frame the words,—
It seems to me like some strange wondrous dream,—
He asks if I am yet a bride betrothed!"
Then Magdalena, anxious, looked about,
As if the loud words compromised her charge,
And warned them: "I beseech you, speak more soft,
And let us seek the shelter of our home.
What if our neighbors should discover this?"
But Walter pleaded: "Let me know the truth!"
While Eva softly spake with winsome smile:

"The church is empty, all our neighbors gone!"
But Magdalena still most anxiously
Exclaimed in haste: "'T is this that gives me fear.
Pray you, sir knight, try fortune somewhere else!"
And while they spake together, one drew near,
A young apprentice of the great Hans Sachs,
The cobbler-poet of old Nuremberg,—
David, by name, apprentice in the arts
Of shoes and song, and in the sacristy.
He drew together the dark hangings there,
Which curtained off the nave from the great space
Where soon should sound the Trial of Master-song.
But naught could break young Walter's glowing thought,
No interruptions, no intruding sounds.
Still he persisted: "Speak the word to me!"
And Eva, holding Magdalena's hand,
Still parleyed, and in hesitation asked:
"What shall I say?" But Magdalena turned
And saw her young friend David, and she cried
In growing tenderness of heart and mood:
"David! ah, David, here?" But Eva urged:
"What shall I answer? Tell me what to say!"
Then Magdalena, her attention drawn,
Fixed her fond gaze on David, answering not;
Until at last, as Eva spake again,
She roused herself and petulantly cried:
"Sir knight, the question that you fondly ask
Is not so easy to give answer to.
In truth this maiden is a bride betrothed,"—

But Eva, who was promised in a way,
Yet not exactly, and must make it known,
Impulsive interrupted with the words:
"But none has seen or known the bridegroom yet."
And Magdalena answered: "That is true,
For no one knows the bridegroom that shall be,
Until the morrow at the Tournament,
When some brave Master-singer wins the prize."
And Eva, interrupting, spake again:
"And his fair bride bestows on him the wreath."
"A Master-singer!" Walter eager cried.
And Eva slyly said: "Art thou not one?"
Walter asked quick: "Is it a Trial of Song?"
Quoth Magdalena: "Yea, and judges stern."
Again he asked: "And who may win the prize?"
And Magdalena spake: "The judges choose."
Eager he asked: "But must the bride choose him?"
And Eva, all forgetful in her love,
Impulsive cried: "She will choose thee, or none."
Startled and overjoyed, the young knight turned,
Pacing the aisle debating what to do.
While Magdalena in dismay exclaimed:
"What hast thou said! O Eva, art thou mad?"
But Eva calmly answered with a smile:
"Good Lena, help me, for I love him well."
But in stern protest Magdalena spake:
"'T was yesterday you saw him for the first."

Eva, replying, spake: "Yea, all my heart was stirred
By that first glance, for long had I beheld
His face in that great painting of the king.
Is he not like young David in his grace?"
And Magdalena questioned with a start:
"How like young David? Thou art surely mad!"
Spake Eva soft: "David, the king, I mean."
And Magdalena, taken back, replied:
"Ah, meanest thou the king of Israel,—
He with the golden harp and flowing beard,
Painted full oft on Master-singers' shields?"
But Eva quickly spake: "Nay, nay, I mean
The youthful David, with his sword at side
And sling in hand, to meet Goliath's might,—
With golden curls like sunshine round his head,
As Master Albrecht Dürer oft portrays him."
And at this sad play of cross-purposes,
Sighed Magdalena, meditating there:
"Ah, David! David!"
But the lad himself
Who bore the honored name of Israel's king
Had now come near, with rule thrust in his girdle
And swinging in his hand a piece of chalk
Tied to a string as marker for the Trial.
And hearing a fond voice that cried his name,
He spake: "Who calls for David? Here am I."
"Ah, David," Magdalena said, "what fate
Ungracious has befall'n our lot."
But to herself she murmured, quite content:
"The darling rogue, he knows what's going on!"

And then aloud she cried with well-feigned voice:
"Why, look, he's locked us all within the church!"
And with a tender look at her he spake:
"Yea, and yourself locked tight within my heart."
Softly she murmured: "Good and true that face,"
But bold exclaimed: "Come now, I say,
What feast or frolic are you planning here?"
Quickly he answered: "Nay, no frolic 'tis!
Most serious business, and I plan the ring
For Master-singers and their feast of song."
Asked she: "What, will the Tournament be here?"
"Nay, not the Tournament, but the Trial of Song;
Here the apprentice gains his right to sing,
And he who does not make a breach of rules
Becomes a Master by more tests severe."
And Magdalena answered with a start:
"Then has this knight lit on the proper place!
Come, Eva, we must wend our way toward home."
But Walter quickly turned to them and spake:
"To Master Pogner may I go with you?"
Then Magdalena answered meaningly:
"Better await him here; quickly he comes.
If you should seek to win our Eva's hand,
This is the place and time where fortune smiles.
Quick be farewells, for now we must be gone."
As two apprentice lads drew near up-bearing
Rough benches for the singers in the Trial,

Walter most anxious cried: "What must I do?"
And Magdalena spake: "Ask David there,
And he will teach you what the contest means.—
Dear David, listen, you are my true friend,
If you persuade this gallant knight to stay.
The finest viand that my kitchen boasts,—
'T is yours, and on the morrow more rewards,
If you can train this young knight for the test,
And bring him through a gallant Mastersinger!"
With that she hurried quickly toward the door,
But ere they went, Eva to Walter cried:
"When shall we meet again?" Fervent he spake:
"This evening surely, and what now I feel,
Ne'er can I tell and never could express!
New is my heart to all that surges here;
New is my mind to this new task begun;
Only one thing I know, to this I hold,—
The ardent hope of winning thee at last!
Since by my sword I cannot gain the prize,
By song I sing my way to victory.
Gladly for thee would I give life and blood;
Surely the poet's daring shall be mine."
Fair Eva with a glowing warmth replied:
"Yea, and my heart shall hold thee in its shrine."
But Magdalena blurted: "Now toward home,
Or some ill fortune will befall us yet."
Then David, measuring Walter with his eye,
Exclaimed with high disdain and open doubt:
"So swift a Master! what audacious folks!"
But Eva and her nurse were quickly gone.

NOW Walter, deep in troubled thought and mood,
Had taken refuge in a great armchair,
Raised high for some old bishop of the church;
The young apprentices moved here and there,
Arranging benches and preparing all
For the approaching Trial of Song.
Spake one apprentice: "David, why so slow?"
And yet another: "Come, work on apace!"
A third exclaimed: "Help with the Marker's stage!"
And David cried: "My labor shames you all!
Work well yourselves, new matters claim my time!"
Spake one: "What patronizing airs he takes!"
Another, sneering, said: "Model-apprentice!"
The first rejoined: "He's but a cobbler's lad!"
A third continued: "Cobbles while he writes!"
Still went the jest: "Hammers his poetry."
One added: "On red leather scribbles verse."
Another with expressive gesture spake:
"His own tough leather soon will be well tanned!"
So they worked on and laughed with passing wit.
But David watched the young knight as he sat
High in the churchly armchair deep in thought,
And soon he called with loud voice: "Now, begin!"
And Walter, looking up astonished, spake:
"What is it?" While young David still exclaimed:
"Begin now! So the Marker cries! So I!

Do you not know that you must stand and sing?"
And Walter asked: "Who might the Marker be?"
Spake David in amaze: "Know you not that?
Have you not been at tournaments of song?"
"Never," quoth Walter, "where the craftsmen judge."
And David further asked: "Are you a Poet?"
Whereat he smiled and said: "Would it were so!"
Persisted David: "Maybe you are a Singer?"
To which the answer came: "I scarcely know."
Then David: "Are you School-man or a Scholar?"
But Walter answered: "All is new to me."
Asked David, with an arch and bantering voice:
"Yet so at once you would be full-fledged Master?"
Then Walter spake: "Makes that such great dismay?"
But David murmured low: "O Lena! Lena!"
Yet scarcely hearing, Walter asked: "What say you?"
But still perplexed quoth David: "O my Lena!"
And pulled his shock of sandy hair and grinned.
Then Walter roused himself, and sternly said:
"Now show me how, explain the ins and outs!"
David, expounding, spake: "All tones and tunes
In Master-singing have their names and forms;

Some are called stronger, some are lighter ones,
And he knows much who knows them well and true.
A Singer and a Poet must he be,
Before he gains the honor of a Master."
Then Walter asked: "What makes a man a Poet?"

Here came the voices of apprentices
Calling from work: "David, come here, we say!"
But David called: "Be still, I 'm coming soon!"
Then turning spake to Walter: "One 's a Poet,—
When you have been admitted as a Singer,
And have learned rightly all the Master-tones,
And can construct by subtle rhyme and words,
And rightly give the accent and the stress,
And so create another Master-tone,
Then you have won the Poet's noble rank."

Again the clamor of apprentices:
"Ho, David! Shall we tell this to the Masters?
And shall you never end your ceaseless chatter?"
But with a quick retort he held them off:
"Oho, that 's it! Am I not there to help,
Then everything you do is wrongly done."
And Walter, now most keen, still questioned him:
"Now tell me this! When is one called a Master?"
And David gravely answered: "Ah, sir knight,

That mighty matter has been thus decreed:
The Poet who by subtle craft of brain
Has written words and rhyme and made a song,
And then can wed it to a new-made tune,
Created from the ancient Master-tones,
He shall at length be crowned a Master-singer."
Sir Walter with all eagerness exclaimed:
"My thoughts are only of that Master-prize!
Here shall I sing and gain the victory!
Yea, I must make my verse and soar in song!"
So David turned to the apprentices:
"What are you doing? See! I was not here,—
And you have twisted chairs and stage awry!
To-day's not singing-school,—you know that well,—
Make small the stage, to-day is Trial-Song!"
Then hastened the apprentices again,
And pulled apart the platform they had reared,
Drew down the heavy curtains of the stage,
And built instead a smaller stage of boards,
Placing on it a seat, with tiny desk
At which the worthy Marker might have place.
Near it a spacious blackboard, and a chalk
Hanging by string, and all about this stage
Long dusky curtains to be tightly drawn.
And as they worked the apprentices made jest:
"This David is the cleverest of the lot!
Surely he hopes to get some mighty prize.
'T is Trial-Song to-day,—he'll take a try!
He's quite a Singer if his boasting 's true.
He knows the 'whack rhyme' well and thoroughly,

And well he sings the quaint 'sharp-hunger' tune.
But best he knows the tune of 'hearty-kick,'
His master played it on him hard and fast."
And with grimaces at him thus they laughed.
But patient David stood their bantering:
"Ah, jeer away, you're laughing not at me,
Another laughing-stock stands here to-day,—
One who was never Scholar, School-man, Singer,
And never Poet, would o'erleap them all!
Here is a gallant youth who thinks to-day
With one fell swoop, and without further struggle,
He shall leap forth a full-fledged Master-singer.
So now be careful with the stage and chair.
Place here and there! This blackboard on the wall,
Just handy for the Marker's reckoning!"
Then with a smile he turned to Walter, saying:
"Alas, that Marker, do you fear him yet?
For many a Singer he has spelled disaster!
He grants you grace of only seven faults,
And ruthlessly his chalk will mark them down.
And who shall make one fault besides these seven,
Has failed entirely, 'outsung and outdone.'
So have a care, the Marker is alert!
And here I sing to you fair words of cheer

"GOOD luck to you in all your Master-singing!
May you the chaplet and the prize be bringing!

The flowery wreath with silken ribbons dight,
May its fair lot be yours, O gallant knight!"

And echoing David's words in hearty glee,
The young apprentices clasped ruddy hands,
And made a ring around the Marker's place,
And gaily danced, uniting in the strain:
"The flowery wreath with silken ribbons dight,
May its fair lot be yours, O gallant knight!"

OW from the sacristy the Masters came.
Pogner, the goldsmith, led the brave array,
And walking with him the renowned Beckmesser,
Long the Town-Clerk of fair old Nuremberg.
He was a pompous and pedantic soul,
Bald-headed, old and crabbed, widower long;
He swelled his thin chest, strutting grandly on,
With thoughts of Eva, for whose hand he sought,
To heighten his great dignity of Town-Clerk.
Most earnest was their converse, as they walked.
Spake Pogner: "You may trust my friendship well,
And what I have decreed is for your good.
This Tournament is but a public proof,
For who can doubt your perfect Mastership?"
Beckmesser spake: "Might you not change that point

Which caused the single doubt within my mind?
If Eva's whim can change the whole result,
What use to me is all my Mastership?"
Asked Pogner: "What! And have you based
your hopes
Solely upon the issue of the rules!
Surely, if her heart's wish you cannot gain,
'T were better that you did not gain at all."
Beckmesser answered: "Yea,' t is surely true,
But pray you speak a kindly word for me,—
Say that my wooing 's pleasant to your mind,—
And that you wish my suit most prosperous!"
And Pogner spake: "With right good heart I
will!"
While yet aside Beckmesser sadly mourned:
"I would he never had decreed this trial!
If disappointment comes, how shall I stand
it?"
Meanwhile, the gallant Walter had ap-
proached,
And coming near to Pogner, bowed to him
Most graciously and spake: "Permit me, Mas-
ter!"
While Pogner smiled a greeting: "What, Sir
Walter?
And do I find you here in singing-school?"

Beckmesser still was murmuring to himself:
"If women used their heads as well as hearts!
But sometimes the worst failure touches them
More than the brightest flight of poesy."
To Pogner, Walter still addressed himself:
"At last I now have found my proper place,
And frankly I confess that from my home

What drew me here to far-famed Nuremberg
Was solely an absorbing love of Art.
I have neglected telling this before,
But now to-day I publicly announce it, —
I deeply long to be a Master-singer!
Admit me, noble Master, to your Guild!"
And as the other Masters now advanced,
Pogner spoke earnest to those nearest him:
"Friend Vogelsang, and you, Friend Nachtigal,
Hear you this great good news that now I tell:
This noble knight, a worthy friend of mine,
Longs most desirously to be a Master-singer!"

Still mourned Beckmesser, standing far apart:
"Once more will I entreat, yet if he holds,
I must attempt to win the maiden's love.
Some moonlit night when she alone may hear,
I will assail her heart with serenades!"
He turned, and noted Walter, muttering low,
For each new comer stirred his jealousy:
"What man is this who seems a fresh face here?"
While Pogner spoke to Walter joyously:
"Believe me, my young friend, my heart is glad!
It seems to me like old times come again!"
Still gazing at the youth, quoth Beckmesser:
"I wonder who he is? I like him not!"
While, holding Walter's hand, Pogner exclaimed:
"What you desire, most gladly will I help!"
Still more suspicious, Beckmesser bold sneered:

"What does that fellow here? Why smiles he so?"
Yet further Pogner spake with hearty cheer:
"Yes, 't was my joy to help you sell your lands;
Now 't is my joy to help you to our Guild!"
With darkening looks Beckmesser moaned aside:
"Oho, Beckmesser! have a care of him!"
The young knight answered Pogner's hearty words:
"Best thanks I offer, and heart's gratitude.
And dare I then to hope that here to-day
I may present myself as candidate
Both for the honored guild and honored prize,—
Contending for the rank of Master-singer?"
At his bold words, aghast, groaned Beckmesser,—
Hostility had reached malevolence:
"Oho, what scandalous and audacious fool!"
But Pogner graciously to Walter spake:
"Sir knight, these matters are decreed by rule.
To-day is Trial-Song. I will state your case,
The Masters always give me willing ear."

And now the Master-singers have assembled,—
The last Hans Sachs, who quoth: "God greet ye, Masters!"
Then honest Kothner, Nuremberg's best baker,
Brought forth the list, and standing from the rest,
He read the formal call, and spake the names,—
With many a jest and joke of homely wit:
"Masters, I give you formal invitation

To this Song-Trial, and our craftsmanship.
The name and fame of every one I call:
And first I call my own, and answer, too.
Fritz Kothner sure is here! And you Veit Pogner?
Yes, there he is! And now Kunz Vogelsang?
Yes, there he stands! Sit down! And Herman Ortel?
Always in his right place! Balthazar Zorn?
Always is he on time! And Conrad Nachtigal?
True as his song! And now Augustine Moser?
He never fails! Is Nicholas Vogel here?
He's sick! God send him health,—so say we all.
Hans Sachs? yea, there he is! Sit down there, David,—
Be not officious for thy master's good.
Sixtus Beckmesser? Always near Hans Sachs,
And always rhyming him to 'bloom and wax.'
Ulrich Eisslinger? yes, he's here! Be seated!
Hans Foltz? he's here! Hans Schwarz. Thank God, the end!
The meeting's full, and 't is a goodly list!
And first of all a Marker must we choose."
Cried Vogelsang: "Nay, first, the festival."
And eagerly spake Beckmesser to Kothner:
"If you are pressed, my turn I gladly yield."
But Pogner: "Nay, not yet, my masters. Hold!
I would make known a weighty matter to you."
And with great dignity the Masters rose,
Stood for a moment, then sat down again,
As token of their honor and attention.
And Kothner said: "With pleasure, Master. Speak!"

Veit Pogner waited for a little space,
And then with grave and reverent words addressed them:
"Now hear me, and mark well what I may say.
The happy festival of John the Baptist
You know we celebrate upon the morrow,
On flowery meadows and the velvet sward,
With games and dances, and with merry feasts;
Forgetting care in wholesome merriment;
Each one rejoicing as his heart may wish.
And well you know the Masters on this day
Will bring together all the singing folk
For Tournament of Song in mighty choirs;
With chant and clamor will they march along
Across the open field and through the gate
'Mid all the gladsome sounds of festival;
The multitudes with happy hearts assembling
To hear the contending choruses of song.
Yet, in this mighty web and woof of song,
Foremost of all comes the great Master-song
In special contest by all Master-singers.
For this each year a special prize is given,
And far and wide are happy plaudits heard,
Both for the prize and for the song that wins it.
Now, God be thanked, I am a prosperous merchant,
And since each donor gives the best he can,
So must I well consider mine own gift.
Much have I thought upon it, deep and long:
Hear ye what my fond heart is fixed upon.
Oft has it caused me sorrow and much shame,
To hear the burgher folk throughout the nation
Reproached as niggard in their gifts and thoughts;

In lofty palace and in lowly hut
The bitter word and base rebuke is made,—
'The burgher lives for greed and gold alone.'
They have no thought that we in this fair land
Are devotees of Beauty and of Art,
Yet 't is our honor and our glory too
That here we nobly love, as all men should,
The fair and good in Art in every form.
This to the world I fain would prove most boldly,
And therefore, gracious Masters, hear you well
The precious gift I offer for the prize:
To him who wins the victory of song
In Tournament on John the Baptist's day,
No matter who the gallant youth may be,
Will I, Veit Pogner, of old Nuremberg,
Lover of Art, and goldsmith of this town,
Give with my gold and lands and other gifts,
Eva, my only daughter, as his prize."
With vigorous delight the Masters nodded
And spake enthusiastic to each other:
"Most nobly said, a brave word and brave man!
Now see what a good Nuremberger does!
Yea, far and wide we 'll waft his happy praise,
Veit Pogner, our most worthy citizen!"
Then up the apprentices jumped most merrily:
"Hurrah for good Veit Pogner, thrice hurrah!"
And Vogelsang spake archly under breath:
"Ah, would we all were bachelors again!"
Quaintly good cobbler Sachs gave utterance:
"And some perchance would willing give their wives!"
And Nachtigal now added his sly jest:
"Come, single men, work with a single eye!"

Then Pogner spake again: "Now, hear me well,
For I my meaning would most clearly put!
No lifeless gift is this I offer you, —
My daughter in the judgment must have voice.
The Guild shall give decree as to the winner,
But as to marriage, it is only fair
That she shall have the last deciding vote."
At that firm word, Beckmesser spake to Kothner:
"What think you, friend, is that word just and fair?"
Friend Kothner spake aloud: "And can it be,
You put our fate into the maiden's hands?"
While Beckmesser protested: "Dangerous!"
Again Kothner broke in: "I cannot see
How then the Masters' choice has any weight."
So some approved and others criticised,
While anxiously Beckmesser spake the word:
"Nay, let her choose as pleases her own heart,
And let this Prize-song contest stand alone."
But Pogner answered: "Nay, let me explain.
Whoever we may choose, she may reject.
But none may she accept, unless we choose:
A Master-singer must her bridegroom be, —
Unless we crown him, she must die unwed."
But good Hans Sachs, strong in his simple sense
And in his faith in honest people's hearts
And judgment too, spake out: "O Pogner, stay!
Perchance your plan is good, but goes too far.
Know ye that simple love from maidens' hearts
May not with Art's ideals full agree;
The untutored mind of woman seems to go
Most easily with the judgment of the crowd.

So if to all the people you would give
Some share in your high estimate of Art,
And if you would desire the maiden's choice
Should not obscure the issue of the lot,
Then let the people be the judges too,
And let them reaffirm the maiden's choice."
And at this new arrangement for the crowd,
The apprentices jumped up and rubbed their hands,
For they are happy at each novel turn
And love all uproar and hilarious noise.
Beckmesser cried: "Yea, this delights the youngsters."
But Hans Sachs yet more earnestly continued:
"Methinks such measure you will ne'er repent,
That yearly, on the Feast of good St. John,
You gathered here the people in assembly;
And here the lofty Guild of Master-singers
Took counsel with the people in their work.
'T were pleasing to the multitudes, I think,
And only wise to ask their free decision,
To learn where their delight is rightly centred.
Art and the people thus shall bloom and wax,
By your good help, — so thinks, at least, Hans Sachs."
Spoke Vogelsang: "That sounds indeed most right."
But Kothner scowled: "And is indeed most wrong."
Quoth Nachtigal, sarcastic in his strain:
"When speaks the crowd, then do I hold my tongue."
And Kothner all indignantly exclaimed:
"Fair Art would quickly fall to rack and ruin,

If it depended on the crowd's poor taste."
Beckmesser added, in unfeigned contempt:
"Who tries to please the masses, wastes his pains;
Talking or writing, he must shame fair Art."
Then Pogner called attention and spake on:
"Friend Sachs, what I propose is somewhat new;
With newer novelties 't would be o'erwhelmed.
So may I ask the gracious Masters here,
If they accept my gift as I propose?"
And all the Masters rose and bowed assent.
While Hans Sachs added, with a merry smile:
"Right glad am I, in this most trying case,
To see the maiden have the final word."
And as he spake, Beckmesser murmured low:
"That greasy cobbler, I cannot abide."
Kothner announced: "Let every candidate
Remember he must be a bachelor."
But Beckmesser broke in, in bitter tones:
"Unless a widower, like old Hans Sachs."
But good Hans Sachs answered the jest in glee:
"Nay, nay, good Marker, of a younger brood
Than you or I, must the young gallant be
Who comes to snatch fair Eva as his prize."
With hollow laugh, Beckmesser spake aside:
"Younger than even I, unmannered boor?"
Then Kothner, as the Master-singers' clerk,
Made formal proclamation of the Trial:
"Who offers for the contest, please advance!
Is any ready for the Tournament?"
Spake Master Pogner, with a gracious air:
"Good Masters, let us now begin our work.

Allow me, ere the order of the day,
Preface that I, as fits a Master's duty,
Have offered kindly aid to this young knight,
Who deeply longs to be enrolled with us,
And seeks to-day the Master-singer's rank.
Walter von Stolzing, kindly here approach."
So Walter came, and made obeisance to them,
With noble dignity, while Pogner spake:
"This gallant youth is a Franconian knight,
And well commended by my kith and kin;
The last survivor of a noble race.
Lately he left his castle and his court,
And journeyed here to fairest Nuremberg,
To be a burgher in this worthy town."
Aside unto his neighbor spake Beckmesser:
"A gallant good-for-nothing, upstart knave!"
But Master Nachtigal exclaimed aloud:
"Friend Pogner's word will quite sufficient be."

Then spake the genial Hans Sachs once more:
"'T was long ago we Masters made decree,
To shut nor lord nor peasant from our ranks;
'T was only Art should be the one sole test
Of him who would a Master-singer be."
Spake Kothner: "Tell us first, now, if you please,
Sir Walter, who's your master in the art?"
And Walter answered: "By the silent hearth
In winter-tide, when snow hid house and hall,
And when the gentle spring so sweetly smiled
And woke the sleeping earth to birds and flowers,
An ancient tome of nature's happy art,
A hundred times I read, with fresh delight,

The book of Walter von der Vogelweide,—
He was my master in the poet's art."
And at the mention of this master's name,
Most honored of the famous Minnesingers,
The pride and glory of all German lands,
Most kindly Hans Sachs spake: "A goodly master!"
But Beckmesser complained: "Long dead is he,—
What knew he of our Master-singers' rules?"
So Kothner asked: "But was there any school
In which you learned the craftsmanship of song?"
And Walter with a glowing face replied:
"Yea, when the floods from frost were free
And back returned the effulgent summer-tide,
What once on dreary winters' nights alone
The ancient book had taught me in fair words,
Here in the forest laughed aloud and sang.
I heard sweet music sounding everywhere,
The forests full of choirs of singing birds,—
'T was there I learned the gentle art of song."
Quoth Beckmesser: "His meaning he conceals!"
But Vogelsang cried out: "Good sooth, he's bold!"
While Nachtigal exclaimed: "Noteworthy case!"
Then Kothner spake: "Now, Masters, if you will,
Choose ye a Marker for the Trial-Song.
Sir knight, what is your choice, a sacred theme?"
And Walter answered: "Sacred 't is to me!

My theme is Love, 'the Banner of Love,' it is!
I wave and chant it with a holy hope!"
But Kothner said: "Your theme is secular,
According to our rules and methods here.
Marker Beckmesser, enter, please, the booth."
And rising up Beckmesser slowly passed,
As if reluctant, to the Marker's booth,—
But speaking to himself in gloating glee:
"A sorry business and to-day the more!
Well shall my chalk harass you with its strokes.
Know ye, sir knight, Beckmesser is the Marker!
Here in this booth he does his duty well;
He gives you but the grace of seven faults,
Marking them ruthlessly upon the score;
But if these seven you shall once o'erstep,—
Then, bold sir knight, you have outstepped the game.
My ears are keen, but lest you be disturbed
By these fierce markings that my chalk may make,
Here in this booth I'm kindly hid from view.
Let God Himself defend you,—if He can!"
With that he placed himself within the booth,
His head poked out for a last look of scorn,—
Malicious and ironical grimace.
Then jerked the curtains to, biding his time,
While Kothner read aloud the Masters' rules,
The Leges Tabulaturae of the Masters:
"Whoso would know the rightful craft of song
May learn it from this Table of the Rules.
Each Master-song as Master-singers make it
Must have its orderly and stated measures;
By regulated rules these must be governed

And never in the least be violated;
A Strophe must be two or more full stanzas;
In which the self-same melody obtains;
A Stanza must of several lines be blended;
Each line must finish with its rightful rhyme;
Then shall be made a tuneful After-song,
Which shall consist of several full lines,
Having its own particular melody,
Though somewhat different from the other stanzas;
So many staves and sections of such measure
Belongs to every perfect Master-song;
And he who can create a brand new song,
With never more than four old syllables
Of melody from well-known Master-tones
At any single time,—all else original,—
His song shall be awarded Master-prize.
These are the rules, now take the Singer's seat."
Sir Walter looked upon the high armchair
And asked: "This place?" Spake Kothner: "'T is the rule."
Then the young knight mounted the churchly chair,
Towering aloft among the rows of benches,
With scant delight and murmured with a sigh:
"Only for thee, Beloved, do I this."
Aloud cried Kothner: "The Singer's in his place!"
Beckmesser from his booth called: "Now, begin."
Then Walter paused a moment, gathering up
The memories of childhood, and commenced
To sing a tender song, full of the breath
Of forests and the murmur of the streams:

"BEGIN," cries the Spring through the woodlands,
And the echoes like music ring,
And far from the distance comes sounding,
The choiring of birds as they sing;

"A melody rising and throbbing,
With a growing wonder and power,
As it sings and swells through the forest,
Waking joy in each leafy bower.

"Ten thousand sweet heavenly voices,
In rapturous chorus clear,
Like bells in the blue dome yonder,
That chime to the charmèd ear.

"And exultant nature rejoices,
And the green-woods are all a-wing,
With the birds and flowers a-flutter,
In the tender Song of Spring."

This was the first full Strophe of his song,
Wrought of the woven web of whispering winds.
But as he sang came many groans and moans
From the closed Marker's booth, and scratching chalk,
And Walter heard and paused, then boldly sang
The second Strophe to the same sweet tune:

"And there in a hedge of the thorn bush,
With dark hate and envy torn,
Hiding close like stricken craven
Sits old Winter, sad and forlorn.

"With dead leaves entwining his forehead,
His gray, lurking head is dropped low,
As he seeks to turn joyous singing
To dirges of bitterest woe.

"Begin! so a sweet voice called me
Ere aught of love I guessed;
It waked me from my slumbers,
And stirred my quivering breast.

"My heart with deep emotion
Seemed bliss without alloy,
My blood in floodtides coursing
Filled me with throbbing joy

"The beauteous night, so balmy,
And sighs of ecstasy,
Waft forth my pent-up passion
To love's far boundless sea.

"Deep calls to deep in rapture,—
The earth to heaven above,—
And life pours forth in splendor
A glorious Song of Love."

Now while he sang, the Marker's booth had shown
Signs of commotion and a restless soul;
Till Beckmesser at length could wait no more,
But tore apart the curtains, with the cry:
"And are you finished?" Walter, with fierce scorn,
Answered him sharply: "What is that to you?"
And Beckmesser held up his chalk-marked slate,

Completely covered, and triumphant cried:
"I've finished up the slate! That's ended, sure!"
While into laughter broke the solemn Masters.
But Walter cried, impatient to be heard:
"Now, listen, I must sing my lady's praise,
I have not ended yet my melody."
But curt Beckmesser spake and left the booth:
"Sing where you will, but here you are undone!
My Masters, look upon this full marked slate,—
Long as I've lived I never saw the like;
Nor would believe if one should swear to it."
Then were the Masters in perplexity,
All deeply moved, and knew not what to speak.
But Walter cried: "Good Masters, shall it be
That he shall thus torment and plague me sore?
Shall I be heard by you, or ended thus?"
Then Pogner spake in mild and gracious way:
"One word, friend Marker, you seem somewhat wroth."
And Beckmesser retorted, angrily:
"Who will let him be Marker from this time,
Yet that this candidate is now outsung,
I have decided by the Master-rules."
Then Hans Sachs, who had listened to the song
From first to last with growing interest,
Spake a most reasonable and kindly word:
"Methinks we do not all endorse your view.
This young knight's song and melody, to me,
Were fresh and new, and not to be condemned,
Although they follow not the usual rules.
He made his way with firm and happy cadence,
Although it measured not to our stiff modes.
His art was craft of a most worthy kind,

And if our rigid rule does not apply,
Perchance it follows freely other rules."
Then Beckmesser with a fine scorn replied:
"Aha, quite right; now hear him, if you please.
Hans Sachs has made a gap for every fool,
Where in and out his easy way may go,
And follow well the bent of empty minds.
Let the folks sing in alleys as they please,
But here we must have discipline and rules."
Again spake Sachs: "Friend Marker, why such wrath?
Pray let your soul a little patience know.
Methinks your judgment would be riper far,
If you would listen with a juster ear.
And therefore would I speak this final word,—
We ought to hear the young knight to the end."
Beckmesser cried: "The Guild and all the school
Of course must weigh as nothing with Hans Sachs."
But he replied: "Nay, nay, the Lord forbid
That I should speak against the Masters' rules;
But surely it is written there most plain,
The Marker shall be one unprejudiced,
That in his judgment he may show no bias.
Now if a Marker has a-wooing gone,
And is deep smitten by the god of Love,
And knows a rival on the Singer's seat,
And judges that same rival too severely,
He shames himself before the entire school."
Sir Walter's face was flaming as Sachs spake.
Quoth Nachtigal: "Hans Sachs, you go too far."
Kothner exclaimed: "Too personal and free."

While Pogner pleaded with the Master-singers:
"I pray you, Masters, cease this stir and strife."
Beckmesser, still more angry, quick rejoined:
"Tell me, has Master Sachs a right to mention
Which way in love my footsteps may be turning?
Should not a cobbler's care be rather given,
Which way my shoes are wearing out their sole?
Yet since my cobbler is a mighty poet,
Such mundane things as shoes get little heed.
Look ye, the heels are down, the sole is split,
And these worn uppers need his awl and thread.
I 'll praise his verses and his rhyme galore,
His dramas, plays, his farces, and his song,
If he will bring to-morrow my new shoes!"
And as he scratched his wise head, Hans Sachs said:
"My clever friend, I fear you have me there!
But, Master, tell me if it is not fair,
That since I find upon the thickest leather
An inspiration for some little verse,
May I not write some happy lines on you—
Our noble-born and worthy-held Town-Clerk?
The verse I seek that shall most worthy be,
My humble Muse has not as yet inscribed,
But I will find it one of these fine days,
Perchance when I have heard this knight's full song.
So let him sing it to the end, I pray."
And all the Masters cried: "Enough, sing on!"
To the young knight Hans Sachs most kindly spake:

"Yea, sing, despite the Marker's angry mood!"

Then Walter, though indignant, mounted up
And took the Singer's seat, while Beckmesser
Brought out again his thickly covered slate,
Plastered with chalk-marks, and around the circle
Thrust it beneath their very faces, speaking:
"Why should we hear the fellow any further?
He only means to mock us and deride us.
His every failing, both the grave and slight,
Is plainly on this slate for you to see:
False verses, phrases all unsingable,
Clipped syllables, and errors worse than that;
Some words equivocal, some rhymes wrong placed,
The entire stave reversed and once displaced,
A patchwork-song between the other verses,
And blind and clouded meaning everywhere;
Uncertain words and changes, and worse yet,
Ill-managed breath and here and there quick starts;
Ran through it all unmeaning melody,
A hodge-podge of all tones that he can find.
Now if such record does not prove itself,
Then, Masters, count the number of the faults.
Already with the eight he was outdone,
Yet never have I seen one go so far,—
Well over fifty, counting in the rough!
Speak, can this fellow ever be a Master?"
Then said the Masters gravely to each other:
"Yea, yea, that 's so! 'T is plain enough.
It does look badly for the gallant knight.
He may a genius be, as Hans Sachs thinks,

But in our singing-school he counts for naught.
What Singer can we yet neglect to honor,
If this young novice shall become a Master?
If we shall welcome rank without the Art,
How shall the Master's lofty grade be kept?
See how disturbed and angry stands the knight!
Hans Sachs has given such encouragement.
The matter 's bad! But, quick, let him sing on!
Up, Masters, speak! Raise hands in quick assent."
Then Pogner spake aside: "Alas, I see
My poor young friend is in a sorry plight.
Yet now I cannot change my first decree
Without, it seems to me, far worse results.
Right gladly did I make his friendship known,
And gladly would I have him for my kin;
Yet if perchance as victor he is named,
Who knows if my fair daughter will be pleased?
Somehow I fear that trouble lurks ahead,
If Eva has a choice of her good Master."
But at the show of hands from the grave Masters,
Walter had risen in the Singer's seat,
And stirred with indignation and despair,
He lifted up his voice and boldly sang
The third and final Strophe of his song, —
The After-song, — and at its start he dared
To ridicule in sharp words, and stinging,
Both Beckmesser and other Master-singers:

"From gloomy thorny thicket,
Behold the screech-owl swoops,
With circling flight it wakens
The ravens' croaking troops.

"In sombre ranks they flutter,
With fierce and piercing cries;
With voices hoarse and hollow
The daws and magpies rise.

"There comes on golden pinions
A wondrous bird in flight;
Each brightly glowing feather
Gleams in the glorious light.

"It leads far off and hither,
By woods and watery main;
It thrills my heart with pleasure
And sweet and tender pain.

"Its wings grow strong through sorrow,
It mounts o'er earth's dark tomb;
Its flights attain the rapture
Of heaven's highest dome.

"Yet to our homes it cometh
And nestleth in the wood,
Where lived my Master Walter,—
Master of every good.

"Love is my bird of Heaven,
Warbling My Lady's praise,—
Above all raven croakings,
My rapturous song I raise!

"Farewell, ye Masters, ye have heard,—
But scarce ye know my heavenly bird!"

With a quick gesture of most proud contempt

He left the Singer's seat and fled the church.
Then spake Hans Sachs, delighted with the song:
"Ha, what a noble courage, what a glow
Of splendid genius! Listen, gracious Masters!
Be still and listen, Hans Sachs doth implore you!
Friend Marker there, grant us some little peace.
Let others listen, cease your rabble talk!
No use, must I beseech you all in vain?
I scarcely hear my own words in this din!
Ah! ne'er will they reward this gallant singer.
Yet that was courage, singing as he did!
Surely his heart is all right in his breast!
A true born poet-knight he seems to me.
Hans Sachs makes shoes and verses, all may know it,
This youth is gallant knight and noble poet!"
And all the apprentices rubbed their hands in glee,
Jumped from their benches, joining hands, and danced
In festive ring around the Marker's booth,
Singing hilarious songs and shouting loud:

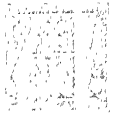
"GOOD luck to you in all the Master-singing,
May you the chaplet and the prize be bringing!
The flowery wreath with silken ribbons dight,
May its fair lot be yours, O gallant knight!"

But Beckmesser cried out with screeching voice:

"Now, Masters, give your vote!" And at the word,
Displeased by Walter's bold and haughty words,
And obstinate in their own ways and rules,
Most of them raised their hands, and hoarsely cried:
"Outsung, outdone, rejected by the Guild!"
Then more confusion. The apprentices
Shouldered the benches and the Marker's box.
Soon all was clamor and a rude disorder,
As toward the door the Master-singers crowded,
Perplexed, ashamed and eager to be gone.
Alone in front remained the good Hans Sachs,
Pensively gazing at the Singer's seat;
At last the apprentices took this seat away,
And off he turned with gesture of despair,—
Most eloquent in meek discomfiture,
Half smiling, yet half earnest in his gloom.

PART II. THE COBBLER-POET

THE COBBLER-POET



PLEASANT summer evening in the streets
Of Nuremberg, — in crooked roads and alleys,
That wind back to the homes of merchant princes,
And to the quaint old shops of humble craftsmen.
Here stands Veit Pogner's house, a stately home,
Befitting his exalted worth and wealth.
A noble flight of steps leads to the door,
The sunken porch is graced with carven seats;
A lofty linden gives its grateful shade,
With green shrubs at its foot and garden bench.
Nearby the humble home of good Hans Sachs,
Facing the street, and shaded in the main
By a great elder-tree that spreads its boughs
In blessing o'er the cobbler-poet's work.
An old-time door, its upper half ajar,
Stands guard between two windows facing forth,
One from the workshop, while the other looks
Out from the modest chamber of his home.
David, the young apprentice, now is ending
The long day's work; he puts the shutters up,
And other youths are at the self-same task
For other shops; and as they worked they sang:

"Feast of St. John! Feast of St. John!
Flowers and ribbons may all put on!"

But David hummed aside another air:

"The wreath of flowers and silk so fine,
Would it to-morrow might be mine!"

Then out of Pogner's house, with stealthy step,
Stole Magdalena, basket on her arm,
And called to David slyly: "David, hist!"
But David toward the alley turned and cried:
"Who calls me?" But those scamps, the apprentices,
Mocking, called softly in the self-same voice.
He scolded: "Stop your noise, you singing pests!"
Whereat the other apprentices cried out:
"David, what is it? Do not be so proud!
Were you less stiff, perchance you would see more!
Feast of St. John, Feast of St. John, most fair,—
Yet blind his eyes to Mistress Lena there!"
And Magdalena called him once again:
"Now, David, listen! Come a little nearer!"
Most gladly David found her there and spake:
"Ah, Mistress Lena, is it your dear self?"
She pointed to her basket as she said:
"Here's something nice, look in and take a peek!
And it shall be for my dear lad to eat.
But tell me, first, how goes it with Sir Walter?
You coached him well?—and did he win the prize?"
Then David spake, crestfallen and chagrined:
"Ah, Mistress Lena, 't is a sorry plight.
He was outsung, outdone and was rejected."
And Lena echoed in amaze: "Rejected!"
Asked he: "Why are you so amazed?"

But Magdalena snatched away the basket
Of pretzels, doughnuts, cookies and all dainties
From David's outstretched hands, for no reward
Can come for such bad news, and sharply spake:
"Hands off the basket, none for you to eat!
God help us, our fine gallant is rejected!"
And wringing her poor hands in grim despair,
Back to the house she flounced, while her sad lover
Looked after her, amazed and open-mouthed.
At this the mischievous apprentices, —
Ah, what a lot of merry rogues were they! —
Who near had stolen, overhearing all,
Advanced to David, with their happy wishes:
"Hail to the apprentice and his fair young bride!
How well his courting and his wooing goes!
We heard it all, and saw more than we tell!
She whom his heart adores, for whom he gives
His life, has gone, and left nor cake nor basket!"
But angry David flew at them and called:
"Be off with you and stop your foolish noise!"
Jeering they teased him, dancing as they sang:

"HEAST of St. John! midsummer day!
All go according as they may!
The Masters woo, apprentices too!
Old folks as well as babies!
The graybeards grim wed maidens slim,
Apprentices wed old ladies!
Heigh ho! come on!
Feast of St. John!"

Then David, wrathful, started after them,
When down the alley came the good Hans Sachs,
With all his burly strength and ruddy cheeks.
He stepped between them and full sternly spake:
"Here, boys, be off, each mother's son of you!"
And to their heels they took, and quick were gone.
"What, David!" spake he, "are you fighting too?"
Said David: "Nay, not I. They sang and mocked me."
The Master gave a word of kindly caution:
"Then pay no heed to them, and teach them better!
Come now and get within and make my light!"
So David ruefully obeyed, and asked,
Scratching his head: "What of my singing lesson?"
His Master spake: "I give you none to-night.
This my decree for this day's fresh offence.
Cobble the shoes upon the mending last."
He spake severely, and they moved along
Into the workshop and were lost to view.

NOW just returning from an evening walk
Came Master Pogner, and upon his arm
Fair Eva, and they walked in silence on
Until the father, peeking through a crack
In Hans Sachs' shutter, spake to her and said:
"Let's see if Neighbor Sachs bides home to-night.

I would have speech with him. Suppose I call."
Scarce had he spoke, when David came in sight,
Bringing a lamp from some dark inner room,
And sat himself beside the window bench
To do some mending at his task of shoes.
"Methinks they 're home," said Eva, "see the light!"
Veit Pogner meditated with himself:
"Now shall I speak? Perchance 't were better not.
If I shall say unusual things to him,
'T is like he 'll speak what were far best unsaid.
Was it not he who said I went too far?
And if forsooth I kept not by strict rules,
It was but that which he himself has done.
Yet thinking thus may be mere vanity."
Aloud to Eva spake he with a smile:
"And thou, my child, thou sayest not a word?"
But Eva answered with a winsome grace:
"A proper child but speaks when it is bid."
Quoth Pogner: "Right and true. Now, come, dear child,
And sit beside me on this bench awhile."
So neath the linden on the carved stone seat,
They seated them to have a quiet talk.
Spake Eva: "Is it not a bit too cool,
This evening air? Yet sultry 't was all day."
But well contented, quickly answered he:
"Ah, no, to me it seems both mild and charming.
This evening air is soothing to the soul."
But Eva seemed distraught and deep perturbed,

Some problem in her soul. Still spake he on:
"It prophesies another joyous day,
A morrow full of sunshine and delight.
O child, does not thy beating heart presage
The happy fortune that to-morrow brings,
When Nuremberg, yea, all the happy town,
The guilds and burghers, rich and poor together,
Will meet in joyous throng upon the meadows,
To see thee give the prize to him who wins
The Masters' choice, and thee as his fair bride?"
Then Eva asked, with voice that faltered slightly:
"Dear father, must he surely be a Master?"
He answered: "Yea, a Master is thy fate."
And at that word, disturbing to her heart,
Came Magdalena, beckoning at the door.
Quickly she echoed: "So, it is my fate!—
But now come in, the evening meal is waiting."
Then spake the father: "But we have no guest."
She answered, eager: "Have we not Sir Walter?"
Surprised, he asked: "How so, is he within?"
But Eva asked: "Did you not meet to-day?"
Aside he murmured: "Not so pleasant now,
Not yet, — what now, shall I keep still awhile?"
"Dear father, come," said Eva, "change your dress."
And as a good obedient sire he went,
But as he walked, he mused and slowly spake:
"Ha, what way does my fancy lead me on?"
Then Magdalena asked, with softest voice:
"Eva, why are you waiting here outside?"
Softly she murmured: "Quietly, speak low!"

And Magdalena whispered, under breath:
"Saw David,—says he did not win the prize!"
"Not win the prize!" cried Eva. "Heaven help!
What shall we do? I tremble with my fears!
Tell me! oh, who can help us in our plight?"
Then Magdalena spake: "Perhaps Hans Sachs!"
Eager she answered: "Yea, he's fond of me.
'Tis well! I go to him." But Magdalena added:
"Be careful not to tell him everything.
If you stay long, your father will be anxious.
After the supper, I will tell you more,—
A secret some one has just told to me."
Asked Eva: "What some one? our good Sir Walter?"
But answered she: "Not he, but Beckmesser."
Yet Eva spake: "Something worth while, I hope."
And still conversing, into the house they went.

MEANWHILE Hans Sachs had come into his shop,
And turning to young David sitting there
Beside the window, working at the bench,
He spake: "Come here! That's right. Now by the door
Put there in place my work-bench and my stool.
Then get to bed, for early ye must rise.
Sleep off your folly and be wise to-morrow."
David asked, anxious: "Shall you work to-night?"
The Master spake: "Let that not trouble you."
But David meditated with himself:

"What was it ailed my Lena? Would I knew.
And why my Master still must work to-night!"
But Sachs quick asked: "Why are you standing there?"
At that he slowly said: "Good night, my Master."
And Hans Sachs smiled, and answered him:
"Good night!"

His young apprentice gone, the Master sat
In quiet mood awhile, arranged his work,
Took up his tools and laid them down again,
Enwrapped in thought. Resting his arm upon
The closed half-door and leaning back, he spake:
"How fragrant is this elder-tree's sweet scent!
So mild, so full and strong its perfumed breath,
I feel my limbs relaxing in its charm,
And easily sweet words flow from my lips.
But still what matters what my lips can frame,
Since I am but a poor unlettered man?
Yet when my work is burdensome and drear,
Sometimes there comes the friendly Muse with rhymes
And cheery tunes that seem to set me free;
But oft methinks 't were better that I stick
To leather, leaving poetry alone."
Again he tried to work, but paused and thought:
"Yet something haunts and holds me ever;
I feel great thoughts not fully understood;
I cannot loose them, neither can I bind them;
Can scarce express them even when I find them.

How can I gauge this feeling in my soul?
'T is all unfathomable to my mind;
No rule can fit it, nor can measure it.
There is naught wrong in such a deep emotion,
It seems so old and yet is ever new,
Like songs of birds, in Maytime's sunny hours.
But he who hears it, and his fancy stirs,
And seeks to sing again that soulful strain,
Will gain perchance only much scorn and shame.
'T was Spring's command, the tender pain and woe,
That moved within the singer's breast to-day.
He sang because he must, so grew his power.
Felt I that surely in my inmost soul.
This bird has throat that warbles from the heart.
Perchance the worthy Masters were dismayed,
But well contented with him was Hans Sachs."

NOW, while he spake in happy reverie,
Came Eva stealing softly toward the shop,
And all unnoted gained the Master's side
And spake: "Good evening, Master Peg-Away!"
While, pleasantly surprised, he looked and said,
His broad face smiling welcome with his words:
"Ah, child, sweet Eva, it is late for thee.
Methinks, forsooth, I guess the cause, fair neighbor,—
The new-made shoes?" And Eva archly spake:

"Thou 'rt far afield. The shoes I 've not tried on.
They are so beautiful and fine, so richly wrought,
I have not dared to trust my feet in them."
Quoth Sachs: "To-morrow, wear them as a bride."
While Eva asked, seating herself by him:
"And who to-morrow shall my bridegroom be?"
Softly he answered: "Pray, how can I tell?"
Asked she: "Then dost thou know I shall be bride?"
And Sachs responded: "Everybody knows."
Spake Eva: "So, if everybody knows,
Then, my good friend, it is truth positive.
Forsooth I thought thou mightst know something more."
Archly he asked her: "What should I know more?"
Then she: "Behold, must I tell all I mean?
Then must I be right stupid with my hints."
But he replied: "Nay, nay, I say not that."
Quick she rejoined: "Then thou must be the bright one."
He smiled and answered: "Nay, I know not that!"
So bantered they, until at length she said:
"Thou nothing knowest, nothing saith, Hans Sachs.
Now see I clearly pitch is never wax.
And yet forsooth I thought thee somewhat sharper."
His eyes were smiling as he said: "Dear child,
Both pitch and wax are known full well to me,—

A CHAT WITH HANS SACHS

With wax I rubbed the stitching of the silk
With which I sewed thy pretty, dainty shoes;
And with the pitch I rubbed the coarser thread,
That's good enough for any manly guest."
"Whom dost thou mean," she asked, "some nobleman?"
And big with a mock pride he said: "Just so!
These for a Master proud who boldly woos;
And thinks to win the prize upon the morrow,—
For Master Beckmesser I make these shoes!"
Quoth she: "Put pitch in plenty in the soles,
To stick him fast and tight, and leave me free."
Hans Sachs protested with a sly grimace:
"He hopes to sing his happy way to thee!"
Disdainfully she asked: "Why should he hope?"
Retorted he: "And pray, why should he not?
So few the number of the bachelors."
Then Eva smiled at good Hans Sachs and said,
Tossing her head most prettily the while:
"Might not some widower indulge the hope?"
Spake he: "My child, would I were not too old!"
With gay and happy laugh she bantered him:
"Nonsense! Too old? Art is the only thing!
Who masters Art is free to woo and win!"
And with a gracious bow, he answered her:
"Dear little Eva, you are flattering me."
But she: "Not I, 't is you, if it is so.
And yet confess, how your affections wander!
Heav'n knows whom you adore now in your heart.
These many years I thought it was just me."
Quoth he: "Because I nursed thee in these arms?"

Said she: "'Twas thus because you had no child!"
And he replied, all kindness in his face:
"Because I had both wife and children once."
Spake she: "But they are gone, and I am grown."
He answered: "Yea, and grown both tall and fair."
Then sweet she smiled and said: "I thought perchance
That I might fill their places in the home."
Merrily laughing made he fond reply:
"Surely I would in thee have wife and child,
And truly it would be most fond delight.
Alack, thy thought is beautiful and kind."
And pouting just a little she replied:
"Methinks the mighty Master mocks me now.
I do believe thou wouldst be little sorry
If on the morrow, under the nose of all,
This Beckmesser sang me away with him!"
Spake good Hans Sachs: "If he succeeds to-morrow,
I have no say. Thy father gives the word."
Then with a quiet smile she still persisted:
"Pray, tell me where a Master keeps his head.
If I should seek thy wit, is it at home?"
He answered: "Right thou art! My brain 's a-whirl.
I 've been annoyed and sorely vexed to-day,
And still some traces of the clouds remain."
"The singing-school," she asked, "and all its rules?"
"Yes, child," he spake, "and an unjust decision."

"Ah, good Hans Sachs," quoth Eva, "hadst thou said
This much at once, my tongue would not have plagued thee.
Now tell me who it was sought entrance there."
Said he: "My child, it was a knight unlearned."
"A knight!" she cried. "Dear me, did he succeed?"
With gloomy frown upon his brow he said:
"Not so, my child. It ended in a strife."
"Alas," she cried, "how strange! Relate it, pray,—
If thou art vexed, can I have any peace?
Thou sayest he was defeated and rejected?"
And sadly he replied, with downcast look:
"I fear 't is hopeless for the gallant knight."
Nodding his curly head, as if he meant:
"Bless thee, he could n't sing,—and well for us."
Meanwhile came Magdalena to the door.
Softly she called: "Come, Eva, come!"
But Eva lingered, asking: "Hopeless,—why?
What dost thou know of this young gallant knight?
Are there no means by which he may be helped?
Sang he so badly and so full of faults,
That never may he hope to be a Master?"
Then slow and thoughtful Hans Sachs spake the word,
A half-malicious pleasure as he teased:
"My child, his case is lost among us here.
In no land may he be a Master-singer.
When one is born a master of free Art,
He has among our Masters little favor."

The Cowbird Duet

Still Magdalena called: "Thy father waits!"
"Yet one thing more," spake Eva, "tell me true,
Did he not win one friend among the Masters?"
At that Sachs laughed, and quickly answered her:
"That were a joke, for shall we call him friend,
Who made us all feel very small indeed?
This young Lord Haughty, let him prance
And sing his raptures elsewhere in the world.
What we have learned with ceaseless toil and care,
We must exhibit and enjoy in peace.
No genius must disturb our quiet ways.
So let him fame and fortune elsewhere seek."
And Eva hasty rose and haughty spake,
Her cheeks all reddening with indignation:
"Yea, he will find his fame and fortune elsewhere,
In spite of all you jealous, envious fellows.
Some place where generous hearts are glowing warmly,
And no deceitful Hans Sachs ever lives.—
Yes, Lena, I am coming in a trice,
For sorry consolation find I here.
I smell the pitch, and Heaven help us all,—
Better to burn it and warm up the soul."
Just then she caught upon the cobbler's face
A broad and happy smile, and swift she saw
She had betrayed herself, and blushing still,
Deep vexed she quickly crossed to her own door
And stood in earnest talk with Magdalena.
Nodding his head with meaning, murmured Sachs:

"I thought as much. How swift their tongues will wag!"
Whereat he closed his shop-door's upper half,
Shut out the light, except a tiny crack,
That sent a far ray through the gathering night,
And solitary sat in gloomy thought.

MEANWHILE to Eva whispered Magdalena:
"Heaven help, why didst thou stay so long away?
Thy father calls." Said Eva: "Answer him,
And tell him I am ill and gone to bed."
"No, no," she answered. "Hark! I have some news.
Beckmesser found me. He is all stirred up.
To-night, if thou wilt linger at the window,
He says that he will come and serenade thee.
He'll sing the song with which he hopes to win thee,
To see if it may gain thy wise approval."
With angry look she spake in lofty scorn:
"He need not trouble! Would my knight might come!"
And Magdalena asked: "Hast thou seen David?"
While Eva curtly spake: "What's that to me?"
Then Magdalena with herself communed:
"Perchance I was too harsh, he may be vexed."
Asked Eva soon: "Is no one yet in sight?"
"Methinks," she answered, "some one seems to come."
Eager cried Eva: "Tell me, is it he?"
She answered: "Haste! 't is time for us to go!"

But Eva with courageous spirit spake:
"Nay, not till I have seen my own dear lover!"
But Magdalena said with doubtful voice,
Peering uncertain through the evening dusk:
"I am mistaken, for it is not he.
Come, now, lest thy good father grow suspicious."
But Eva murmured: "Still! my anxious heart!"
Then Magdalena spake: "Let us consult now
How to receive Beckmesser's serenade."
Quoth Eva: "At the window stand for me."
But Magdalena answered: "What, must I?
Surely 't would rouse poor David's jealousy.
He sleeps across the alley. Yet, what fun!"
Then Eva whispered: "Hark, I hear a footstep!"
And Magdalena: "Come, now, let 's begone!"
"It 's coming nearer," Eva whispered soft.
But Magdalena: "Nay, thou 'rt wrong, 't is not.
Come home until thy father be asleep."
And here the voice of Pogner loud was heard,
Calling within: "Ho, Lena! Eva, come!"
So Magdalena cried: "It 's sure high time!
Come, now, thy gallant knight is far away!"

UT even while she spake, they heard the sound
Of nearing footsteps, and Sir Walter came.
E'en now he turned the corner of the house,
And Eva, who was being dragged indoors
By faithful Magdalena, freed herself,
And with a cry of joy rushed straight to Walter.
"'T is he!" she cried, flushed rosy with delight,

While Magdalena moaned in sad despair:
"All 's come at last! Now do be quick, I pray!"
And Eva cried in transports of deep bliss:
"My own true love, for so I dare to call thee!
For thou dost know it, as I know it well.
Thou art my hero-poet and my lover."
But in the deepest sorrow Walter spake,
Remembering his failure at the Trial
And all the musty rules that held him down:
"Nay, thou art wrong, merely thy friend am I,—
Not worthy of the prize as Master-singer.
The Masters have despised my noble rank,
Nor can they brook my art's free inspiration.
And this I know full well, I must not dare
Ever to think of my fair lady's hand."
But Eva cried: "Thou 'rt wrong! Thy lady's hand
Awards alone to thee the happy prize.
Thy dauntless courage hath ensnared her heart!
To thee alone she yields the flowery wreath."
Still Walter spake, perplexed and sad of heart:
"Ah, no, thou 'rt wrong! My lady's hand,
Although no other shall succeed in gaining,
Yet on the terms thine honored father planned,
For me 't is now forever out of reach!
A Master-singer must thy bridegroom be;
The Guild must crown him, ere thy hand shall crown!
Thus to the Masters hath thy father vowed,
And what his word hath pledged, he may not break.
'T was that stern vow that made me bold to sing,
Although the place and folk were strange to me.

I sang with heart aflame, and hope aglow,
And strove by love to win the Master-prize."

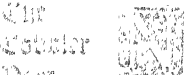
Now as he spake a watchman's horn was heard
Loudly and harshly echoing through the night;
And Walter clasped his sword, and fiercely stared
As if expecting some assaulting foe.
But Eva took his hand and soothing said:
"Beloved, spare thy wrath, let go thy sword.
'T is but the night-watch and his screeching horn.
Beneath the linden, quickly hide thyself,
For he is surely coming down this way."
And Magdalena at the door called softly:
"Eva, 't is growing late; better come in."
But Walter pleaded: "Wilt thou fly with me?"
And Eva asked: "Must I not fly from thee?"
He cried: "Thou fear'st, —" She laughed: "The Guild hath spoken!"
And with this jesting word, she quick was gone.

Louder the horn was heard, and soon appeared
The worthy night-watch of the ancient town.
Turning the corner of the house he sang:

"HEARKEN, good folks, to what I tell:
Ten of the clock and all is well!
Put out your fire, put out your light,
That none may come to harm this night!
And praise the Lord of Heaven!"

So sang he, and he shuffled o'er the stones,
Great staff in hand and lantern at his side.

And as he went, far down the narrow alleys,
Still sounded out the screeching of his horn.
Scarce had he gone when good Hans Sachs' shop-door
Was opened wide and forth the Master looked,
Shading his lamp and smiling as he spake:
"Great things are doing now, it seems to me.
Here's an elopement planned before my eyes;
If I'm awake, surely this must not be."
While the young knight, behind the linden shade,
Muttered complaining to his saddened heart:
"Will she not come again, oh, woe is me!
Yet there, she comes again! Ah, woe, not she!
'T is Magdalena, surely! No! Yes! Thou!"
And Eva, wrapped in Magdalena's clothes,
Sank on his breast and whispered lovingly:
"Thou foolish child, 't is I, and all thine own!"
While in a rapture of delight he cried:
"Blest Heaven, thus I know! My heart is sure
That I have won this glorious Master-prize!"
And Eva, who had now resolved to go
With her dear lover to the world's last end,
All eager whispered: "Then no more delay!
Let's hasten off! Oh, would that we were gone!"
Then Walter fondly cried in loving haste:
"Come through this narrow lane, for at the gate
My servants and the horses wait for us."
And in his mind's eye he beheld the wedding
And welcome in his far Franconia home.



NOW as they turned into the narrow lane,
Hans Sachs with sudden cunning set his lamp
Behind a water-globe and sent a stream
Of widening light that made the street like day;
And Walter and fair Eva found themselves
In the new blaze of brilliance, and in haste
She pulled her lover from the light and cried:
"Woe's me! the cobbler! What if he should see us!
Hide thee! and keep thee well away from here!"
Asked he: "What other road leads to the gate?"
And Eva, pointing to the right, replied:
"Round by that road, yet 't is a crooked lane,
Nor do I know it well. Besides, that way
We run the risk of meeting the night-watch."
He spake: "Well, then, let 's try this alley."
Said she: "The cobbler first must leave his window."
And Walter in a fine bravado cried:
"See, now, I 'll force him from his window-seat!"
But anxiously protesting, swift she spake:
"Nay, do not show thyself, he knows thee well."
Surprised he asked: "He knows me? Who is he?"
She answered: "'T is Hans Sachs, the cobbler-poet."
"Hans Sachs?" said he, "my good old friend Hans Sachs?"

"Nay, nay," she answered, "not a friend of thine.
He, like the others, only slanders thee."
Spake Walter, sad in disappointment keen:
"What, Sachs against me too? Then, out his light!"

Now as they spake, Beckmesser up the alley
Stole softly for his serenade of love.
Awhile he paused and gazed at Pogner's house,
And toward the upper windows raised fond eyes.
Then on a stone seat near Hans Sachs' house,
He sat himself and straightway tuned his lute.
And Eva whispered to the impatient Walter:
"Let be the light. Now listen, what is that?"
And Walter paused and answered: "Sound of lute."
Cried Eva, petulant: "What dire distress!"
But Walter answered: "Nay, why shouldst thou fear?
Behold the cobbler's light has ceased to glare.
So let's begone!" Said she: "Nay, seest thou not
This newcomer again has spoiled our plans?"
Said he: "I hear and see! 'Tis some musician.
What is he up to here, this time of night?"
And Eva cried: "Behold him, 't is Beckmesser!"

And as the first sound of the lute he heard,
Hans Sachs was smiling with a new idea;
Gently he took his light away, and further
Within the shop he placed it, opening wide

His door, and on the threshold placed his work-
bench.
Then happening to overhear the cry
That broke from Eva's lips, he softly mur-
mured:
"Aha, I'm right! The plot is thickening fast!"
Meanwhile spake Walter, in a happy spite:
"Aha! the Marker's here, and in my power!
Here goes! I'll make the rascal rue this
night!"
But Eva whispered in unfeigned dismay:
"O Heaven! forbear! Wouldst thou my father
wake?
Do let him sing his song and then begone!
We can well hide behind the foliage here!
Oh dear, you men are such a care and bur-
then!"
Whereat she drew him into the dark shadows
Of the thick foliage, waiting for the song.

And tinkling on his lute, Beckmesser looked
With longing for the window to unclose.
Louder his music grew, and all his heart
Impatient to begin his loving ditty.
And now he cleared his throat with loud ahem,
And opened wide his mouth, when good Hans
Sachs
Turned on the street his streaming light again,
And noisily began to hammer fast
Upon the shoes, while lustily he sang
A rollicking and noisy cobbling-song:

"O FOL de rol! O fol de rol!
Tra la! tra la! tra la! la la!

"When Mother Eve from Paradise
Was by the Almighty Lord out-driven,
Her bare white feet, so small and nice,
By cruel stones were sorely riven.

"This troubled much the kindly Lord.
Straightway an angel he did choose,—
For these fair feet He much adored,—
'Go, make the pretty sinner shoes.'

"See poor old Adam limping round,
I would his steps might boldly stride,—
He stubs his toe, on stony ground,—
Measure his legs for boots, beside.

"O fol de rol! O fol de rol!
Tra la! tra la! tra la! la la!"

Cried Beckmesser, as Sachs began to sing,
With pounds and whacks upon his echoing last:
"What can that be? Drat the accursed noise!
I do believe the roaring cobbler's drunk!"
Yet as he nearer came he changed his tone:
"How, Master? Up so late? and working still?
You break the peace. Why not do all in daytime?"
And Hans Sachs greeted him with cheery voice:
"Oho, our good Town-Clerk! You still awake?
Perchance those shoes still weigh upon your mind!
'T is these I 'm working at! They 're yours tomorrow."

But testily he answered Hans Sachs' wit:
"Deuce take the shoes! I 'll take a little quiet!"
And Walter to fair Eva whispered low:
"What song was that Hans Sachs has just
been singing?
He sings of Eva, has he thoughts of thee?"
Quickly she answered: "Nay, I know the
song.
He means not me, yet mischief may be in it."
For well she knew it told that Sachs saw all
And hoped to balk their fond conspiracy.
Then Walter, all impatient, muttered low:
"Curse this delay, while time is flying fast!"
For Hans Sachs, hammering loudly, sang
again,
As if his work went better as he sang:

"O FOL de rol! O fol de rol!
Tra la! tra la! tra la! la la!

"O Mother Eve, my poor heart aches,
By grief and trouble sodden,
The art-work which a cobbler makes
All under foot is trodden!

"Did not a kindly angel sing
And lift my heart to Heaven's gate,
And bring her gentle comforting,
I 'd leave this cobbling that I hate!

"Yet when sweet song lifts me on high,
Then peaceful joy my soul doth woo,
The whole world 'neath my feet doth lie
And cobbler Sachs is poet, too.

"O fol de rol! O fol de rol!
Tra la! tra la! tra la! la la!"

Meanwhile Beckmesser watched the windows well.
When one had opened softly, low he cried:
"The window's open! Oh, my heart, 't is she!"
Frantic he waved at her and threw a kiss.
And Eva, whispering soft to Walter, said:
"Somehow that song brings sadness to my heart!
I know not how, but oh! let us begone!"
And Walter half drew forth his sword and cried:
"Come, haste away, but first I'll run him through!"
But Eva answered in a piteous fright:
"Nay, nay, forbear!" And quick he answered her:
"Perchance the rascal's hardly worth the sword!"
Said she: "Patience is best, O dearest love!
Sorely I grieve such trouble to provoke!"
Sir Walter asked, a smile upon his lips:
"But pray, who is that fair one at your window?
Who waits so patiently the serenade?"
And Eva laughed: "'T is Magdalena there!"
"Revenge I call that,—sweet revenge!" he cried.
With interest now he followed the odd turn.
But Eva cried, half smiling, half in pain:
"Would we could fly from this fresh flood of song!"

Then Walter spake: "Would he but start his lay!"
And with amusement, yet annoyed and anxious,
They waited for the coming serenade!
Meanwhile, as Sachs continued song and work,
Beckmesser doubtful spake within himself:
"I am undone, if he keeps on in noise!"
Half fearing that the cobbler's roaring farce
Might be mistaken for his serenade.
So he advanced, and spake with gracious tone:
"Friend Sachs, I pray you, give me just a word.
While you are working on my shoes so busy,
Truly I had forgotten them completely.
Don't mind them; stop your work,—I need them not.
As cobbler, I esteem you worthy workman,
But as a friend and critic vastly more.
Your taste, believe me, I do hold supreme,
And therefore pray you hear this little ditty
With which I hope to win to-morrow's prize.
I want your worthy thought upon its merits."
Whereat he loudly strummed upon his lute,
As signal to the watcher by the window,
And once again opened his mouth to sing.
But Hans Sachs loudly cried, and cut him short:
"Oho! your words would catch me in a trap!
And may expose me to another scolding.
For if the cobbler dares to court the Muse,
The work upon the last may suffer ill.
I note how much these shoes are split and slit,
So I must lay aside my verse and rhyme,
And give my wit and knowledge all to these!
I promise you these shoes upon the morrow."

And hot with passion muttered Beckmesser:
"Accursed mischief! Zounds! it 's growing late!
Unless I sing, I fear she 'll leave the window!"
And so again he strummed a tinkling prelude.
But Sachs cried out, his hammer making music:
"And now, begin! Look sharp, I feel like singing."
And in a wild dismay Beckmesser cried:
"Pray hush, don't sing, nor pound! How maddening!
If 't is the post of Marker that you seek,
Then good, and mark with hammer on your last.
Only you must agree to keep the rules;
And hammer only when I make a fault."
And Hans Sachs most complacently agreed
To note the song, while working on the shoes,
And get both done together, for he said:
"I 'll keep the rules, strict as a cobbler can.
Only my hands are itching for the task."
Beckmesser asked: "I have your word as Master?"
"Yea," said Hans Sachs, "and honor as a cobbler."
Again he spake: "If no fault, fair and smooth,—"
"Then," answered Sachs, "to-morrow no new shoes.
The hammer 's idle! But sit down, forsooth!"
For near the corner of the house he stood.
He answered curt: "I think I 'm better here."
"Why so far off?" asked Sachs. And he replied:

"The Marker in the school is always hid."
Said Sachs: "I scarce can hear you that far off."
Beckmesser answered: "With my powerful voice,
'T is better so; 't is hard to soften it."
"That 's good," laughed Sachs. "All right, then. Now, begin!"
So once again Beckmesser recommenced,
And on his lute was thrumming prelude soft,
While from the open window leaned the maid.
Then Walter spake to Eva in his glee,
Recalling the confusion of the Trial
And obstinate raillery of the Master-singers:
"What crazy sounds! 'T is like a foolish dream.
Methinks I scarce have left the Singer's seat!"
But Eva softly spake, with happy laugh:
"A dream? Sleep steals upon me like a spell!
I scarce can know whether for weal or woe."
So well content her head sank on his shoulder.
And now at last Beckmesser raised his song,
Strumming his tinkling lute in serenade:

"I SEE the dawning daylight,
It gives me pleasure true—"

And here Hans Sachs broke in with hammer stroke.
Beckmesser started, but he still sang on:

"And in my heart there rises
A courage fresh and new,—

And here again Hans Sachs went hammering on.
Then Beckmesser in anger turned and spake:

"Is this a jest? What fault have you to find?
And Hans Sachs answered: "You had better sung,

'And in my heart there rises
A courage great and good!'"

Beckmesser cried, with anger growing hot:
"How would that rhyme with what I've said before?"
Spake Sachs: "Think you the melody no matter?
I hold both words and notes should fit in song."
But Beckmesser exclaimed: "Why quarrel here?
Leave off your clamor, are you in some plot?"
And Hans Sachs only answered: "Now, sing on!"
Beckmesser moaned: "Oh, I am all upset!"
But Sachs continued: "Now, begin once more,
While I shall meanwhile score a three bar rest."
Beckmesser muttered: "Best I mind him not.
I must beware lest she be scared away."
So yet again he cleared his throat and sang:

"I SEE the dawning daylight,
It gives me pleasure true,
And in my heart there rises
A courage fresh and new.

"No longer thoughts of dying
A maiden's love to win,
But only now of trying
And eager to begin!

"Therefore, whate'er the weather,
Begone all doubt and care!
I say to all together,
To-morrow will be fair!

"There stands the beauteous maiden
By noble father given,—
Who wins her love and honor
Is raised to highest heaven!

"And whoso will may come here
And see that maiden true,
On her my faith is settled,
My sky of hope is blue!"

But as he sang, so faulty was his song,
So poor in thought and words and melody,
So slovenly the tone and stress and rhyme,
That Hans Sachs kept a din of hammering.
Louder Beckmesser screamed as grew the din,
Keeping his eyes upgazing toward the window.
And there the maid looked down disdainfully.
But still his song seemed never to be ending,
Until just then the cobbler-poet struck
The key out from his last, withdrew the shoes,
And from his stool arose, leaned o'er his door,
And grimly asked: "And are you finished now?"
Dismayed, Beckmesser cried: "Why ask you that?"
The cobbler held the shoes up in his triumph:
"I've finished with your shoes, now mark you that!

These I shall call the famous Marker's shoes,
And hear my Marker's maxim, if you will:
By blows both long and short, writ on the soles,
Both clear and bold and true for evermore,
'Good songs must scan for each and every man.'
So must the writer with his pen remember,
Or else the cobbler at his task will beat him.
Away with you in peace, your shoes are done!
Your feet in them may keep the beat forsooth,
It seems the only beat your feet can keep."
And loud he laughed. But Beckmesser near by
Began another strophe of his song,
Shouting aloud to drown Hans Sachs' deep voice:

"That I am learned Master,
Most willingly I show.
To seek the prize I 'm burning
With thirst and hunger now.

"I call the whole nine Muses
To be my guardians here,
To give me gifts poetic
And train my faulty ear.

"Well know I rules and methods,
And if I veer a shade,
It is deep fear that sways me,
In wooing this fair maid.

"My life, my rank, my honor,
I give most willingly,
If this fair maiden favors
My little song and me!"

And while he screeched, the neighbors showed
their heads.
First a few windows opened, then came more
With fierce and angry faces and called out:
"Who 's howling there? Who is that bawling
loud?
This is against the law, so late at night!
'T is time for sleep; be quiet, we insist!
Now, listen, neighbors, to that donkey's bray!
You there, shut up, and get you gone from here!
Go shriek and bellow down some other lane!"
Hearing the clamor, David now woke up,
Opened his shutter partly and looked forth,
And muttered to himself after a space:
"Who in the deuce is this that shrieks and
bawls?
And who 's that maiden up there at the window?
I do declare, it is my Magdalena!
Good Heavens, that 's it! I clearly see the game!
She favors him and only plays with me!
We 'll see! He 'll catch it! Won't I tan his hide!
And devil help the rascal when I catch him!"
So spake he in his wrath, and snatching up a
cudgel,
Sprang from the window, knocked Beckmes-
ser's lute
Out of his hands, and sore belabored him.
And Magdalena, who was making gestures
Of feigned delight, now shrieked in sudden
pain:
"Heavens, David! God help us! See them
fight!
Help! Help! I say! or else they 'll both be
killed!"

Beckmesser yelled in struggles with young David:
"Infernal rogue! Let me alone, I say!"
And David, beating, banging him, yelled back:
"I will, when I have broken every bone!"
The neighbors at the window urged them on:
"Look now, go at it! See them twist and turn!"
And other neighbors in the alley cried:
"Hello, what's up! Who's making such a row?
You there, stand back! And let there be fair play!
Quick, stop this row, or we'll make bigger trouble!"
And one cried: "Ah, you rogue? What brings you here?"
Another spake: "What's that to you? I say."
The first fierce growled: "You rascal, that you are!"
And sneered the second: "You're another, then!"
The first cried: "Prove it!" And the second struck.
And Magdalena screamed: "David! Beckmesser!"
Quick, a rough crowd of apprentices appeared,
Delighted to increase the tumult, crying:
"Oho! we say. Oho! for the free fight!"
And some said: "It's the cobblers!" Others: "Tailors!"
The first cried: "Drunken rascals!" Next: "Bad singers!"
And soon the crowd was fighting, railing, shouting:

"There, take that blow! That pays you what I
owe you!
You coward! It is a pleasure thus to bang you!
Look out! I'm in the fight to hit you hard!
This fight's as hot as my good wife's hot tem-
per!
See how the cudgels fly! They warm the wits!
Lay on the blows! Hear that! That was a
thumper!
You rogues! You rascals! And you gutter
sweepers!
You blockheads, boobies, dolts, give way, we
say!"
And here and there the apprentices yelled
aloud:
"We know the way the locksmiths have!
They started
This fight; and here the blacksmiths eager
came!
And there that glimpse of light shows us the
joiners!
Oho, and here the coopers dance along!
There come the barbers eager for the fight!
And here the grocers,—almost the whole
guild—
With sugar-plums and spice and cinnamon!
How good they smell! and yet they hate the
fuss,
And wish the row and nonsense could be
stopped!
See that fool there who holds his nose so
high!
Pray, you mean me? I 'll teach you to be proud!
I've pounded haughty noses before this!

Lord, how that sounded! Whack, a furious blow!
Where that stroke fell the hair will never sprout!
Cudgels, beat hard, and crack the nearest head!
Guildsmen, be worthy of your honest names!
Stand up! It is a shame to yield an inch!
Let every man help on the jolly row!"
And so waxed hotter yet the furious fight,
For journeymen came running from all quarters
To help the fray along, and crying loud:
"Ho, ho! Ye journeymen, come on! Come on!
This crowd is waxing mighty quarrelsome!
'T will be a jolly fight before it 's through!
Come on, ye lusty journeymen! make ready!
Here are the weavers and the tanners now!
Their ways and manners keep them jumping fast!
There 's Klaus the butcher! Look out for his fist!
Guilds here! and there! and everywhere are guilds!
Tailors with irons! Oh, see the cudgels flying!
Girdlers and tinsmiths, glueboilers, and chandlers,
Cloth-workers, linen-weavers, all are here!
Here, there, and everywhere, and yet they come!
The whole town 's coming ready for the row!
Surely this fight will be a great one yet!
Run home, you coward, your wife is after you!
Here you 'll get painted black and blue, perchance!

How soon the blows are raining thick and fast!
Guildsmen, ye Guildsmen, do your duty there!"
And as the fight waxed fierce and clamor rose,
The Masters and the ancient burghers came,
And pleaded with the throngs of rioters:
"What is the reason for this brawl and row,
That sounds so far and wide, this dreadful night?
Be quiet and disperse! Let each begone!
Or else there 'll be the very deuce to pay!
Stop crowding up in groups and fighting here,
Or we must curb you by a show of force!"
Then at the windows shrieked the frightened women:
"Oh, what is all this noise and fright and brawl!
'T is terrible! Our hearts are all a-flutter, —
And there our husbands are, as sure as fate!
They 'll come home with their heads or noses broken!
Heigh there below! Listen to reason now!
Why are you eager for this vulgar fight!
What a confusion and a dreadful clamor!
What dire distress and trouble will you make!
Listen, we say! Why are ye such mad fools?
Are your brains fuddled with your wine or beer?"
And one cried in a wail of wild despair:
"Help, help, I say! My man 's there in the fight!
There 's father! One can see him plain enough!
Nicholas! Peter! Christian! Hans, I say!
Ho, listen! Don't you hear me? Listen, Franz!
Heavens! how hard they whack each other's heads!

If they yell 'Fire!' Let us some quenching do!
Come, bring the water pitchers; souse them well!"
And from the windows of a dozen houses,
Basins and ewers poured their cooling floods,
And yet still hotter grew the steaming strife!
Shriek answered shriek, and blow was given blow!
While at her window Magdalena stood,
Wringing her hands and crying in despair:
"Oh, Heavens, what a horror and distress!
David, for goodness' sake, now hark to me!
Cease fighting! leave the gentleman alone!"
But Pogner in his nightgown quickly came,
Pulled Magdalena in and closed the window,
With the quick words: "Good Heavens, Eva, come!
I'll go downstairs and see what it all means!"

Meanwhile fair Eva and her young knight stood
Watching the riot with increasing fear.
At last Sir Walter caught her in his arms,
And cried: "Now let us make our way,
And push a passage through this rioting crowd!"
With that he drew his sword and forced a passage
Through to the middle of the fighting throng;
When suddenly Hans Sachs rushed from his shop,
And with one bound was quickly at their side.
And just as Master Pogner on the steps
Cried: "Lena, ho! Lena, where are you now?"

He pushed the trembling Eva up the steps
And whispered: "Mistress Eva, get within!"
Then catching David with one mighty hand
He gave him a good rousing kick that sent
The sprawling youngster far within the shop;
And catching Walter with the other hand
He dragged him quick within and barred the door;
While Beckmesser, released from David's fists,
Sought instant flight along the darkened lane.
Then suddenly a mighty horn was heard, —
The strident warning of the old night-watch;
And conscience-stricken, yea, and panic-stricken,
The apprentices and journeymen rushed off,
And after them the burghers and the Masters;
Doors were shut quickly with a rattling bang;
Windows came down and shutters were fast closed;
The street was still and quiet was the night;
The full moon shone above, and peace held sway;
The old night-watch came slowly on his rounds,
Rubbed his dim eyes and slowly gazed about, —
Was it a dream, — those distant sounds of brawling
That had so quickened his snail pace? He paused,
Shook his gray head and in a quavering voice
Called to the people as he went his way:

"LISTEN, good people! Hark you, what I tell,
Eleven of the clock and all is well!
God save you all from spectre and from sprite!
And may no evil ghost your souls affright!
And praise the Lord of Heaven!"

Then down a darkened alley still he went,
With staff and lantern. On he shuffled slow,
Far off his steps, far off his sounding horn.
The city in a luminous beauty slept.

PART III. THE MASTER-SONG

THE MASTER-SONG

WITHIN his workshop Hans Sachs sat and read,
Deep in a great armchair at happy ease.
A folio volume—some old poet's lore,
Close written with the ancient script and notes—
Lay on his lap and held his sight enthralled.
The morning sun poured in with golden flood;
The windows were all bright with flowering pots;
The work-bench was neglected, and the tools
And thread and mended shoes enjoyed sweet peace.
David came peeping softly at the door,
And when the Master took no note of him,
He entered with a basket on his arm,
And quietly concealed it 'neath the bench.
Again he watched the Master for a while;
Then well assured that he was full absorbed,
He drew the basket from its hiding-place,
And sought its depths, brought from it divers flowers
And pretty ribbons; at the very last,
A luscious sausage and a frosted cake.
He looked again; the Master still read on,
And gave no heed to him. His hungry teeth
Were just about to crunch good Lena's gifts,
When the great folio rustled turning o'er
A mighty leaf, and David started up,
And quickly hid the dainties as he spake:
"Yes, Master, yes, I took the shoes around
To Master Beckmesser at his abode.

What further? for you called me now, I think."
Yet to himself he said: "He truly acts
As if he saw me not, yet oft 't is true
His anger's deeper when he is most still."
So penitently he approached his Master,
And spoke in fervid flood of hurried words:
"Ah, Master, will you grant me your forgiveness?
Can an apprentice ever win your favor?
If only you could know my Lena well
As I, you would grant pardon instantly.
She is so good, she is so kind to me,
She looks upon me, oh, so tenderly!
When I've been beaten, she it is who soothes me,
And always smiles so heavenly upon me;
When I am hungry, she doth feed me well,
And acts so lovingly in everything.
But see, when yester that young knight was worsted,
There came to me no basket for reward.
That troubled me, and when at length I found
The self-same evening one stood 'neath her window,
And sang to her and bellowed like a fool,
I gave him a most mighty cudgeling,—
And what a row and riot came from it!
Yet for our love it turned out rather good,
For Lena has explained all things to me,
And sent me all these ribbons and these flowers."
His ardor was pathetic, and yet comic;
Thus spake he, but the Master heard him not.
Then further in more anxious tones he cried:

"Oh, Master, say one kindly word to me!"
As still the Master read, David spake soft:
"Would I had hid the cake and sausage first!"
Meanwhile the Master seemed to waken up
From his great dreamy book, and clapped it shut,
And at the mighty noise David was startled,
And tumbled down upon his trembling knees.
Astonished was Hans Sachs to see him there
When from the happy reverie he woke.
Yet far beyond his book the Master gazed,
And out beyond young David kneeling there.
In the far gaze he chanced his eyes to rest
Upon the work-bench, and he saw the flowers
And ribbons, and in kindly voice he asked:
"Yonder I see some flowers and ribbons gay;
They seem most fresh and youthful in their beauty, —
How came they on the work-bench in this room?"
Cheered at the friendly tone, David replied:
"Why, Master, 't is the Feast-day of St. John,
And all must smarten up to grace the Feast!"
Then Hans Sachs asked: "Perchance a wedding feast?"
And David quickly spake: "Would it were so!
If only David might with Lena marry!"
Spake Sachs: "Your folly-evening was last night!"
Said David to himself: "My folly-evening? —
Ah me! that sounds not well for my success!"
Aloud he spake: "Forgive me, gracious Master,
Forgive, I pray. St. John's Day 't is we keep!"

And Sachs repeated slow: "St. John's Day, this?"
Spake David under breath: "He must be deaf!"
But Sachs looked at him quietly and asked:
"Know you your verses of the morning song?
And if you know them, speak them now to me."
Said David: "Verses? Yes, they 're in my brain!"
Aside he spake: "The Master's kind enough!"
Silent he stood a moment, then sang out:
"'St. John stood on the Jordan strand'"—
And as he sang, forgetting the true tune,
He gave the lines the lively melody
That Beckmesser had used in serenade.
But as he saw Hans Sachs' astonishment,
He stopped and recollecting, cried:
"Pardon me, Master, and forgive the slip.
My folly-evening did get in my head."
So now he sang to its own proper tune:

"ST. JOHN stood on the Jordan strand,
And all the world he christened;
A woman came from a distant land,
From Nuremberg she hastened.

"The little son she led that day
Was baptized with a name there;
And as they wended home their way,
And at the last she came there,—

"Behold in German lands she found
A change from Jordan sands,—
'Johannes' there on Jordan ground
In Nuremberg was 'Hans'!"

And as the song was ended, loud he cried:
"Good Master, 't is your own name-day to-day,—
Almost I had forgotten 't was your feast.
See, here, these festive flowers are for you!
These ribbons, ah, and something else there is!
Behold, my Master, what a heavenly cake!
And would you also try this luscious sausage?"
But still the Master seemed to dream, and spake:
"Best thanks, my lad, but keep them for yourself.
Soon to the meadows you shall go with me.
Make yourself gay with ribbons and with flowers,
And you shall be my herald at the feast."
Spake David: "Would I might your groomsman be!
Master, dear Master, you must wed again!"
Asked Sachs: "You wish a mistress in the house?"
Indulging for a moment in a dream
Of wife and child, and sweet and happy home;
But straight the vision was renounced again.
And David spake most modestly and soft:
"Methinks it would appear more dignified."
Laughed Sachs: "Who knows, but time will surely tell."
Said he: "Time 's come!" But spake the kindly Master:
"And has time told what things are bound to be?"

And David answered eagerly and loud:
"Aye, sure! Some things have plainly come to pass.
There 's Beckmesser, whose serenade you ended:
Methinks to-day he 'll scarcely make a stir."
And much amused the Master kindly spake:
"Perhaps 't is so, I will not dare deny.
Now go. But do not break Sir Walter's rest.
And come back when you are in brave array."
And David kissed the hand of good Hans Sachs,
And took his basket and quick scampered off,
Speaking most merrily to his own heart:
"Never was he like this, though sometimes kind.
This makes me quite forget his strap's keen taste."

For a long time Hans Sachs sat deep in thought,
The ancient folio resting on his knees;
Sometimes he leaned his head upon his hand;
And then at length his utterance broke forth:
"Bewitched! bewitched! The whole world is bewitched!
Where'er I seek in town or world archives,
And try to learn why people strive and fight,—
Why stirs their blood in fruitless rage and spite?
Surely they nothing gain for all their strife:
Beaten in fight, happy they seem in flight;
Nor do they seem to mind the cries or shrieks
When their fierce fingers rend their very own,

But always zest and jest they find in struggle.
What tongue can name the secret cause of this?
'T is just the ancient madness of the world.
Naught seems to happen without stir and strife,
No matter what precautions may be taken.
Quiet but gives the power to move more swiftly,
It sleeps but to acquire new waking force.
Who can control this madness of the mob?
How peacefully enshrined in ancient ways,
My dear old Nuremberg was gently sleeping,
Here in the midst of kindly German lands,
When on an evening late one luckless deed
In hindering a burst of youthful folly
Seems to let loose the mob in blind unreason.
A cobbler in his ignorance sets going
The open stream of madness through the world.
Soon from the open highways and the alleys,
A raging rabble sallies forth in fight:
Man, woman, youth and child are seized alike
With blind and foolish passion and delight,
And ere the folly wanes, the cudgels fly.
They seek by blows to smother fires of wrath.
Heaven knows how it began! Some spell of kobold,
Some glow-worm could not find his wonted mate,
And quick aroused the wrath and hate of all.
Or else perchance some strange and evil spell,
Malicious exhalation from the blooms
Of these grim elder-trees on St. John's night.—

But here has come the dawn of St. John's Day.
Now let us see if Hans Sachs cannot weave
Some subtle charm to change the turn of folly,
To make it serve a fine and noble work;
For if perchance the instinct of the crowd
Still lurks within these folks of Nuremberg,
We'll use it for a purpose and an aim
As never by a throng has been conceived;
And ne'er without some folly could be wrought."

'EN as he spake came Walter from the chamber,
For he was honored guest in Hans Sachs' house.
He paused a moment on the threshold step,
Looking at good Hans Sachs to see his mood:
And as the Master heard his gentle step,
He turned and gazed, his book slipped to the ground,
And with his ever happy smile he spake:
"Good morrow, my young guest; you rested late,
Up late you sat. I hope you had some sleep."
He answered quietly and with a bow:
"A little, but that little sound and good."
The Master asked: "And have you courage found?"
Said he: "I had a wondrous lovely dream."
And good Hans Sachs, delighted, further spake:
"That augurs well. Tell me your dream, I pray."
But Walter was reluctant and replied:
"I scarce can think it clear nor touch in words,
For fear my wondrous dream may fade away."

Said Sachs: "My friend, it is the poet's art,—
To dream his dreams and tell them to the world.
Trust me, the noblest thoughts that come to men
Are opened first in the dim realm of dreams.
The poet's craft and poesy's great world
Are nothing but the substance of great dreams.
But tell me, did your dream suggest to you
How you might win the Master-prize to-day?
But let that rest; my counsel, strong but brief,
Is that you shape to-day a Master-song."
And Walter asked him with an eager voice:
"A free-art song and winning Master-song,
How can I bridge the difference into one?"
The Master answered with encouragement:
"My friend, in youth's delightful glow,
When, with the radiant joys of earliest love,
A mighty longing fills and thrills the soul,
And the heart swells with its unwonted tides,
Surely each voice can sing a lovely strain;
No rules are needed, —genius is most free.
For Spring, sweet Spring, sings through the soul her joys.
But when comes Summer, Autumn, Winter cold,
And care and sorrow deepen wedded bliss,
Children and business bringing heavy tasks,
Then he who spite of burdens and of tears
Can use the help of methods and of rules
And sing a glorious song of love and beauty,
He and he only is a Master-singer."
Spake Walter: "One fair maiden do I love,
And I would give my life to make her mine."
But Hans Sachs spake still further, urging him:

"Recall your wondrous dream and tell to me,
And for the rest, trust all to friend Hans Sachs."
So Walter seated him and thought a moment,
And then in quiet voice began to sing:

"THE morn was bright with roseate light,
Rich was the air with fragrance rare,
And beauteous beaming, beyond dreaming,
A mystic garden doth invite."

He paused a moment, and Hans Sachs spoke up:
"That was a stanza; now please take good heed,
And make another in the self-same style."
Sir Walter asked: "Why must it be like that?"
And Sachs quick answered: "That all folks may know
You make a couple like a bride and groom."
So Walter straightway sang another stanza:

"With joy untold my eyes behold
A wondrous tree in majesty,
Its boughs extending, lowly bending,
With fairy fruit of living gold."

He paused, and Hans Sachs commented again:
"You do not close in quite the starting key;
Such difference is grief to the good Masters;
Although Hans Sachs himself may think with you,
Such difference in Spring-time is observed.
Now let us have a verse for After-song."
And Walter asked: "What is the After-song?"

And Sachs replied: "Something like this it is:
If you have truly wedded a good pair,
Then duly follows after them their offspring."
So Walter thought a moment and continued:

"Let me confess
This miracle of blessedness,—
For standing there a maid most fair,
With bright eyes glowing, bliss bestowing,
Leaned on my breast and love confessed,
And handed me the fruit most rare,—
The fruit with rapture rife,
The tree of Life!"

Hans Sachs concealed his feelings as he spake:
"Now truly I call that a Master-song;
See the whole Strophe, perfect now and full,
Yet in the melody was liberty.
I do not say such freedom seems a fault
To me, but to our Masters it is vexing;
For 't is not easy to be understood;
Now please begin and make a second Strophe,
To set the first forth in a clearer light;
I do not know as yet your art's your own,—
How much was poetry, how much was dream."
Then Walter thought and in a moment sang:

"A fountain bright
I saw upon a still and starry height;
From depths profound, with purling sound,
Its waters broke and music woke;
While star-bedecked, bright, with mystic light
A tree uprose that bore my name,—
The tree of Fame!"

Good Hans Sachs, deeply moved, spake to him softly:
"Friend, this your dream was beautiful and fine;
And you have made a noble second Strophe;
Now might you fashion further a third Strophe,
To show the final meaning of your theme."
But Walter cried: "No further now, I beg."
And Hans Sachs rose and kindly spake to him:
"Then we will further rhyme another day;
But I beseech thee hold that tune in mind.
It is a tune fit for a Master-song,
And you shall sing it to the listening throng;
And hold fast to the poem of the dream."
Sir Walter asked: "What plan have you in mind?"
But, with a happy smile, he put him off,
And quick replied: "Your servant, faithfully
Bearing your baggage, here has sought you out.
The wedding garments doubtless you intended
For use at home in happy celebration,
He has conveyed into my keeping here.
Some little bird has doubtless showed the path
To this snug nest wherein his master lay.
Come, therefore, follow me into the chamber,
For 't is most fitting that we both appear
In garments gay to strive for victory.
Come, now, if in this plan you will agree."

CARCE had they passed into the inner room
When Beckmesser came stealthily along,
Peeped in the shop, and finding no one there,
Stole softly in. Most richly was he dressed,
But seemed in mind deplorable and low.
He limped, and rubbed his limbs, and stretched himself,
Attempted to sit down upon a stool,
But quickly rose again, and winced and groaned.
In sad distress he wandered up and down;
Then paused and through the window gazed awhile,
Watching the house of Pogner opposite,
With gestures of hot wrath and deep despair.
Sudden his eyes alighted on the paper
Which Sachs had writ and left upon the work-bench,
For he had noted down young Walter's song.
Beckmesser snatched it up and scanned the words,
And as he saw their meaning, deeply stirred,
He broke out in yet fiercer wrath and cried:
"Here's a new song by Sachs! I know his hand!
Ha! Now all 's clear! I see his deep-laid plot!"
As he spake low, he heard the chamber door
Sound as if opening, and with eager haste
Into his pocket deep he thrust the paper.
Hans Sachs came out, arrayed in festal dress;
He halted as he saw his visitor,
And, half in mockery, spake quick to him:

"Behold, good Master Clerk, to-day you're early.
I hope the shoes I sent you gave no trouble.
Let's see! Methinks they fit you well and good."
Quoth Beckmesser, upflaring in a rage:
"The deuce! I never had such flimsy shoes!
The sole 's so thin, I feel the smallest stone!"
But Hans Sachs laughed and answered him in jest:
"It was my Marker's motto made them thin.
My Marker's hammer had to beat so fast!"
Quick, in fine scorn, Beckmesser made reply:
"A merry jest for you! — But no more strife!
Friend Sachs, I think I know your little plot.
'T is not forgot, what happened yesternight.
Did you not raise that mighty cry and row,
Merely to get me out of your own way?"
But Sachs replied, a twinkle in his eye:
"Nay, 't was your folly-evening, and the thought
Of your near wedding stirred up all the throng.
The gayer and the madder evening's glee,
More blest and happy shall the wedding be!"
But Beckmesser burst out in rage and cried:
"Oh, cunning cobbler, full of vulgar tricks,
You always were my foe. I know your plot!
You widower, most reprobate and shameful,
I 've caught you in a plan to steal from me
This maiden who is destined for myself.
Hans Sachs is longing for the goldsmith's gold;
So in the counsels of the Guild he stood,
And argued, mainly for himself, and fussed.
But now I'm free and I'll pay back the loan. —
You will attend the Tournament to-day;

Now, mark me, if you shall outvie them all,
If I shall be outdone and thwarted there,
I'll bring to light some of your hidden tricks."
But Hans Sachs, still good-natured, spake to him:
"Good friend, you are a bit stirred up with wrath;
You may believe what ill you will of me;
Only I prithee, curb your jealousy.
I'm not your rival in this wooing craft."
But Beckmesser hurled back at him the words:
"Lies and deceit! I know your double plot!"
Then Hans Sachs answered, quietly again:
"Why, Master Town-Clerk, what is in your head?
What plans I have are no concern of yours.
Good sooth, you're wrong to think I go a-wooing."
With knowing look, Beckmesser asked of him:
"You mean to sing to-day? Just tell me that!"
And Sachs replied: "Perchance, but not competing."
Beckmesser asked again: "No wooing song?"
And Sachs made answer: "Nay, dismiss the thought!"
Beckmesser spake, a sneer upon his lip:
"But if I have a proof you can't deny?"
And Sachs looked toward his work-bench as he asked:
"The poem? Here I left it! Did you take it?"
Beckmesser smiled and drew the paper forth,
And sternly asked: "Is not this writing yours?"
"Yes," answered Sachs, "but what is that to you?"

Beckmesser spake: "The writing still is fresh."
Hans Sachs made answer: "True, the ink 's scarce dry."
Beckmesser slowly looked at it and spake:
"Perhaps you call this lay a Scripture song?"
But Sachs replied: "Nay, that were scarcely right."
Beckmesser asked: "Well, then?" And he replied,
Looking him squarely in the face: "What more?"
Quoth Beckmesser: "You ask what more there is?"
And good Hans Sachs made answer: "Yes, what more?"
"Well," spake Beckmesser, "I must say in truth,
You are the most consummate rogue alive."
Still with a beaming face, Hans Sachs replied:
"That may be, but I never yet was known
To pocket papers that belonged to others.
So now that no man dare call you a thief,
I give the paper to you as a present."
Surprised and full of joy, Beckmesser sprang
And danced in glee, exclaiming in delight:
"Good Heavens! you give to me a song by Sachs?"
He held the paper sideways, looked at it;
'T was perfect godsend to his dreary soul.
Then suddenly he frowned and spake again:
"And yet can I believe it? 'T is some plot!
But yesterday you were my desperate foe!
How comes it after all your cursèd deeds,

To show such friendship unto me to-day?"
Said Sachs: "I sat up late to make your shoes.
Methinks it is not so men treat their foes!"
Beckmesser thought a moment, then he spake:
"Aye, aye, that's true, but one thing swear to me:
Swear that if ever you shall hear this song,
Never from your lips shall it be disclosed
That you were author or composer of it."
And Hans Sachs was most ready for the test.
"I swear," he said, "and give you warrant fair
That I shall never say the song is mine."
Full of great glee, Beckmesser spoke to him,
Fawning and flattering in great good humor:
"What want I more? Now is my heart delighted!
And all Beckmesser's troubles have departed."
He rubbed his hands with joy and still spake on:
"Farewell, I must be off to Tournament.
Oft I shall think of you with gratitude,
And in your honor I shall buy your books;
Yea, I shall make you Marker of the Guild,
And you shall wield the chalk within your hand,—
Instead of cobbler's hammer to my woe!
Great Marker of the Guild, Marker Hans Sachs,
May he and Nuremberg bloom fair and wax!"
And with a wave of hand he limped away,
Stumbling and pottering on his stiffened limbs.
While as he went Hans Sachs soliloquized:
"Scarce have I ever met so ill a man!

So evil in his thought, so bound to woe!
There 's many men who scatter reason off,
Yet have their lucid moments of good thought!
Some hours of weakness come to all good men,
But they repent and balance reach again;
But Master Beckmesser is badly gone,
And yet his stupid evil fits my plan;
The pit he falls in is of his own digging."

NOW as he spake, he saw approaching near
Fair Eva, richly dressed and gleaming white
In her most exquisite betrothal gown.
She seemed some vision from the very Heaven.
Glad and most lovingly he murmured low:
"Behold, fair Eva! Thinking of her, brings her!"
Then as she entered at the door, he cried:
"Good morning, my dear child! How charmingly,
How bravely you are dressed this festal day!
You 'll draw both young and old into the contest
When you appear, so wondrously arrayed!"
But Eva answered: "Master, how you flatter!
Yet, if the seamstress did her work so well,
No one will notice if my face is sorry, —
For my new shoes are pinching cruelly!"
Hans Sachs spake up: "The naughty shoe! Remember
'T was your own haste. You would not try it on!"
"Nay," answered Eva, "I was far too trustful!

Yet in a certain Master I'm deceived!"
Said Sachs: "I'm deeply grieved. Come here, my child,
And I will make it better in a trice!"
Spake Eva: "If I stand, it wants to go;
And if I want to go, it holds me back."
And Hans Sachs made a great face as he spake:
"Place here upon this stool your dainty foot,
And let me see this shocking fault of mine!
What is amiss?" She answered: "Far too wide!"
He spake: "My child, that is pure vanity!
The shoe is narrow." And she answered him:
"Yes, so I told you; and that makes it hurt!"
Again he asked: "Here on the left, it pinches?"
"Nay, nay," she answered, "not on the left, but right!"
"And here?" he asked, "just here upon the sole?"
"Nay, nay," she answered, "up here on the ankle."
"Well," said Hans Sachs, "that's very queer and droll!"
But pouting charmingly she spake:
"But, Master, who should know, or you or I,
Where the shoe pinches, if 't is I that wear it?"
And Hans Sachs answered, as a glimmering
Of something deeper struck his nimble wit:
"I wonder why, if 'tis so wide, it 's narrow?
Perchance it pinches just because it does."
For as he spake, upon the chamber's threshold
Came Walter, clad in glittering array,
With all the trappings of his knightly rank;

But at the sight of Eva, quick he stopped,
Spell-bound before the beauty of her presence.
And as she saw, she stifled a slight cry,
But kept her foot still firmly on the stool,
While good Hans Sachs was kneeling there
before her,
His back toward the door. Still Sachs spake on:
"Aha, 't is here? Now I discern the trouble!
Child, you are right! The trouble 's in the sole!
Just wait a moment and I 'll make it right.
Now stand just so, and I 'll undo the shoe;
A moment on the last, and peace is yours."
So gently he drew off the dainty shoe,
And while with sly pretence he made it right,
Seeming oblivious of all else the while,
She stood in modest silence, face aglow,
With loving looks at Walter in the doorway.
As Hans Sachs worked he spake with happy
jest
Of his hard life of ceaseless toil and moil,
Except when helper of some love-lorn maiden:
"Always a-cobbling, that is just my fate;
Both night and day, I hammer at my work.
Hark ye, my child, I 've often thought of it:
How could I bring my cobbling to an end?
The best way is the Tournament to-day:
Perhaps as poet I would win some fame!
Come, now, reply! You do not seem to speak,
Yet 't was yourself made me think of it!
All right. I hear you say, —'Stick to your last!'
Forsooth I would that some one sang for us.
I heard to-day a song most wonderful, —
It only lacked the third and fairest Strophe."

THE FOOT OF THE FAIREST IN NUREMBERG

Still standing in the doorway, Walter gazed
In Eva's eyes, and finding there a light
Of answering love, he broke forth into song,
The final Strophe of his Master-lay:

"THE stars so bright in their dance of delight
Lingered there on the radiant hair
Of that wondrous maiden with beauty laden
In a circlet of light, all star bedight.

"And still to my eyes woke new surprise,
For the light of day showed two-fold ray,
Two rare transcendent suns, resplendent,
In her heavenly eyes I saw arise.

"Her beauty so rare, in that radiant air,
Star-crowned and bright with the mystic light,
Was wonderful vision, dream Elysian,
And O bliss divine! Her heart was mine!

"Thus grace directed and fame elected,
She crowned me with joy, and love confessed.
In my poet's breast throbbed the joys of the blest,
In Love's sweet Dream!"

Still busy at his work, the good Hans Sachs
Brought back the shoe as Walter sang his song,
And as he fitted Eva's dainty foot
He spake: "Hark, child! that was a Master-song.

Such music honors now my humble roof.
But look you, if the shoe is still ill-set.
My cares are ended! Yes, it does me credit.
Let's see! Stand down, and speak if still it pinches."
But Eva stood, gazing as if enchanted,
And listening in a rapture to the song.
Then came a flood of tears, and on the breast
Of good Hans Sachs she sank, and clung to him,
While Walter came in silent gratitude
And took the Master's hand. A moment later
Hans Sachs had turned himself disconsolate
From the fair couple, leaving Eva's head
To rest in joy upon her lover's breast.
But Eva stopped the Master, drew him to her
And spake to him in tenderest tones of love:
"Oh, dear Hans Sachs, my best and truest friend,
How can I ever pay the debt I owe thee!
How helpless had I been without thy kindness,—
Still wrapped in childish blindness but for thee!
Through thee it is I win life's dearest treasure;
Through thee it is that I have found my soul;
Through thee I wake, through thee I learn to think;
Yea, all my nobler, freer, higher life
Through thee and thee alone is made to bloom!
So, dearest Master, thou hast right to chide."
But Hans Sachs answered softly with the words:
"My child, I know of Tristan and Isolda,—
The whole dark tragic story have I read;

And if Hans Sachs is prudent as I think,
He will not court the fate of poor King Mark.
'T was time the right man had appeared in sight,
Or mayhap I had been ensnared at last.
Aha, there 's Magdalena 's found us out.
Come in! Ho, David! What 's that lad about?"
Then Magdalena entered the wide door,
Most brave in holiday attire, and David
At the same time came o'er the chamber's threshold,
Most gaily dressed, splendid with flowers and ribbons.
And Hans Sachs loud exclaimed with hearty laugh:
"The witnesses await! Sponsors are found!
Now for a christening! Please take your stand!"
And as amazed they looked at him, he spake:
"A wondrous child in this house is just born;
And we should dower it with worthy name,—
Such is the custom of the Master-craft.
When one has made a noble Master-song,
They christen it with fitly chosen title,
That men may know and rightly speak of it.
So let me tell you, honored company,
What is our duty and our privilege.
A noble Master-song has been completed
By young Sir Walter, words and music both.
This happy father of a new-born poem
Invited me and Eva as the sponsors,
Since we have listened patiently and well;
And now we hasten to the christening;
And that the deed may be with solemn fitness,

David and Lena shall be witnesses;
But since an apprentice ne'er can certify,
And since right well he said his lines to-day,
Herewith I make him now my journeyman.
Kneel, David, and receive this cuff in token."
So David knelt, and with a hearty laugh
The Master boxed him on the ear,—for this
Was ancient token of release,—and spake:
"Arise, my journeyman, this stinging blow
Will ever mark for thee regenerate vows.
What else is lacking, none of us can blame;
For who is conscious of his secret sin?
Now, that the Master-song may have its rights,
I give it here its true baptismal name:
The Glorious Story of the Morning Dream!
So be it named unto the Master's glory.
Now may it live and grow in grace and favor!
I bid thee, young godmother, speak a word!"
And Eva spake, blushing in fond delight:
"Happy am I, as dawn smiles on my bliss;
Happy the rapture of to-day awaits me;
This dream of highest favor, heavenly glory,
Full is its meaning of its truest duty;
A Master-song most tender and divine.
It shows my heart's deep pain, yet conquers sadness;
Is it but morning dream? Yet scarce it seems
More than a dream, so wondrous sweet it is!
Now know ye what the song spake soft to me?
I heard its quiet theme ring loud and clear,
And in the Master's Tournament of Song
I found it honored by the highest prize!"
And Walter looked on her and fondly spake:
"It was thy love, so pure and high and noble,

That led me on into the heights of song.
It was thy love revealed my heart's sweet pain,
Yet conquered all its sadness in revealing
To thee a morning dream. Yet scarce it seems
More than a dream, so wondrous sweet it was!
I know now what the song spake soft to thee,
Its quiet theme rang loud and clear to thee,
And in the Master's Tournament of Song
It found all honor by the highest prize."

Then spake Hans Sachs, and deeply moved was he:
"I feel with this dear child its loveliness,
And in a very gladness sings my soul;
Yet I must hold in good control awhile
The deep emotions of my throbbing breast.
It was to me a tender evening dream,
I scarce can tell all that it meant to me;
This gentle song upon a quiet theme
Spake to me loudly the eternal truth,
That youth and love can never, never die!
It shall win favor of the Master-prize!"
Even young David spake with happy voice:
"Am I awake, or am I dreaming still?
Scarce can I tell what hopes are in my breast!
'T is but a morning dream of which we hear,
Yet what I see seems scarcely real to me.
Here on this spot I have become a free-man!
And Lena there! Oh, joy supreme, my own!
Oh, round and round my head is in a whirl,
That soon perchance I may be called a Master!"
And Lena, joyous, uttered the same strain:
"Am I awake, or am I dreaming still?

Scarce can I tell what hopes are in my breast;
'T is but a morning dream of which we hear,
Yet what I see seems scarcely real to me!
Here on this spot you have become a free-man!
My David dear, oh, joy supreme, my own!
What glorious honor comes to me, who knows?
That soon perchance I'm bride of a young Master!"
Then quickly Hans Sachs cried in happy glee:
"Now, let 's be off! Your father waits for us!
Quick to the fields, go dancing on your way!
But come, sir knight, a glorious courage take!
David, my journeyman, lock up the shop!"
And Eva tore herself away, and hastened
With faithful Magdalena toward their home,
While Hans Sachs and Sir Walter hied them forth
And David shut the door and turned the key.

O-DAY has come the festive Tournament
Upon the fair broad meadows near the town.
The silver Pegnitz winds across the field.
On its bright bosom float a hundred craft,
Hung with gay bunting and with many flags,
In which the happy companies of burghers
Of many different guilds, with banners raised,
Come with their families to the festival.
The standard-bearers bring their banners up,
And place them proudly near the Singer's stage,
Until a forest of fair flags is there.
Upon the fields are gaily festooned booths,

For fair refreshment and much merry-making;
And here the apprentices of the Master-singers,
Most bravely decked in holiday attire,
With flowers and ribbons and with slender wands,
Fulfilled, with frolic dignity and jest,
The offices of heralds and of ushers,
Receiving all the companies of burghers,
To lead them in procession to the stand
Where the great Tournament will shortly be.
Among the guilds the shoemakers marched past,
Singing their Guild-song with a lusty fervor:

"HO, for St. Crispan! Honor him!
He was a good and honest man!
We all are good and honest men!
And do what every cobbler can!

"Kind was St. Crispan to the poor,
He made for them warm, honest shoes;
When leather failed, he stole him more,—
The poor he 'd not refuse.

"Each cobbler has this easy conscience,—
When leather from the tanner goes,
No obstacles to labor sees he,—
To buy or steal right well he knows!

"Then good St. Crispan! Honor him!
Oho, he was a mighty limb!"

Then followed the town-pipers with their pipes,
And makers of fine lutes, who played on them;

And guilds of toy-makers came marching on.
Then came the tailors, singing lustily:

"WHEN Nuremberg besieged did stand,
With famine and despair,
Undone had been both folk and land,
Except for a tailor there.

"He had a skill and courage great;
Within a goat-skin he did hide,
And on the wall did jump and skip
In view of all outside.

"The foe beheld with deep dismay,
This goat that skipped so free;
They cried: 'The Devil owns the town
Where goats skip merrily!'

"Oho, we sing for the skipping goat
With the cunning tailor 'neath his coat!"

And close behind the tailors came the bakers,
And as they marched, they sang their jolly song:

"HO, ho, for the baker's happy trade!
My friend, have you your baker paid?

"Want of bread, oh, want of bread,
That is a hardship true, sir,
For if you're not by bakers fed,
Old Death will feed on you, sir!

"Ho, ho, for the baker's happy trade!
My friend, have you your baker paid?"

And here and there the apprentices called out:
"Heigh-ho! heigh-ho! Here come the maidens gay!
Play up, town-pipers! Play your merriest lay!"
And soon there came a gaily painted boat,
Filled with fair maidens in quaint peasant costume;
The apprentices helped the maidens to the banks,
And danced with them the merriest of dances,
While the town-pipers played; in fun and frolic
The journeymen were seeking for their share
Of festive maidens, but the apprentices
Whisked them away across the flowery meadows.
And from the landing-place ran David, crying:
"You dance! What will the Masters say to that?"
But for reply, they only made grimaces.
"Don't care?" he said, "then I'll be jolly too!"
So at the word he seized a pretty maiden,
And mingled in the dance with greatest ardor.
And many people saw him and laughed loud;
But some one cried: "David, your Lena sees you!"
And quick alarmed he let the maiden go.
But looking round and seeing naught of Lena,
He found new courage, danced again and cried:
"Now, cease your jests, and let me dance in peace!"
But at the landing-place the journeymen
Gave signal to the throng and loudly cried:

"Behold the Master-singers! Master-singers!"
And David in a wild dismay exclaimed:
"Good Heavens! Then farewell, you pretty thing!"
Whereat he gave the maiden a fond kiss,
And tore himself away. Quickly the dance
Was ended, and the apprentices were hastening
To meet the Master-singers as they came.
The crowds were parted for the worthy Guild,
And in a brave procession marched they on,—
Fair Nuremberg's great Guild of Master-singers.
First Master Kothner came, as standard-bearer;
Then followed Master Pogner in his pride,
Leading fair Eva and her group of maidens,
All richly dressed, among them Magdalena;
Then followed other noble Master-singers,
And the whole people greeted them with cheers
And a triumphal waving of the hats.
When the procession reached the Singer's stand,
The place of honor was assigned to Eva,
Who seemed a princess in her group of maidens.
And in the midst of all the Guilds' fair banners,
The Master-singers' banner topped o'er all.
In rank and file the apprentices advanced
Most solemnly, and turning spake together:
"Silentium! good folks, silentium!
Let there be naught of talk, or buzz, or hum!"
And after they had called for silence thus,

As master of the ceremonies quaint,
Hans Sachs arose and quietly stepped forward.
At sight of him the people shouted out;
Full well they knew the poet of their hearts,
Who sang the people's sufferings and hopes.
They waved their hats and kerchiefs, and they cried:
"Hans Sachs! Hans Sachs! behold good Master Sachs!
Sing, one and all! Shout, one and all, his song!"
And all the throng united as one voice
In this fair song of his, which in their hearts
And in their memories was cherished well:

"AWAKE, there comes the dawning day!
I hear upon a hawthorn spray
A happy-hearted nightingale!
The sweet voice sounds through hill and dale!

"The night sinks slowly in the West,
While day comes lustrous from the East!
The morn with ruddy splendor high
Breaks through the heavy-clouded sky."

And after they had sung, full loud they shouted:
"Hail, good Hans Sachs! Hail, cobbler-poet, hail!
Hail, Nuremberg's own darling! Good Hans Sachs!"
Then for a moment there was silence deep.
Hans Sachs, enthralled by strong affection's power,
Awhile stood motionless and gazed afar,
Beyond the multitude. At last he turned

A genial look upon them, and he bowed
Most courteously and began to speak,
Deep feeling showing in his trembling voice,
But slowly gaining firmness as he spake:
"Dear friends, you ease your hearts, but burden mine;
For deep I feel my own unworthiness;
But what I prize from you above all else,
Behold it is your kindly love and honor!
Already a great favor have I had
In being chosen spokesman for to-day;
And in my speech as truly in my heart
You will be honored each and every one.
As we hold Art so highly in esteem,
It well behooves us in this Tournament
To show that one in his most rare devotion
Esteems fair Art as worthy of his all,—
One of our Masters, rich and wise and noble,
Will prove to-day his pure and strong devotion.
His only daughter, his most precious treasure,
With all his honor and his boundless wealth,
He offers as the highest crowning prize
To that victorious singer who shall come
Before us all and show the highest Art!
So hear my words, and mark me well, I pray:
This Tournament is free to every poet!
Most gracious Masters, who compete to-day,
To you before the people now I speak!
Bethink you what a matchless prize is this,
And let each one who dares essay to win it
Be stainless in his life and in his honor;
Be guileless in his heart and true and good!
True Art, true Music and true Love are here!

This prize is gift to crown both heart and life;
For never in the olden days or new
Was freely offered such a lordly dower
As this fair maiden, queen of womanhood,—
She is adorable by every gift,
And may the very grace of Heaven attend her!
Thus Nuremberg doth give her highest honor
To Art, and to her honored Master-singers!"

Most deeply were the people stirred and moved,
Shouted their joy and thundered their applause;
While Hans Sachs walked to Master Pogner's side,
And touched by love they grasped each other's hands.
Then Master Pogner spake: "Hans Sachs, my friend,
Most grateful is my heart. You speak its depths."
To him good Hans Sachs made sincere reply:
"Much is at stake, yet keep a noble courage."
Then came the apprentices and hastily
Before the platform, where the Master-singers
Sat in their dignity and highest honor,
Heaped up a little mound of living turf,
Beating it firm and strewing it with flowers.
And Hans Sachs said aloud: "If you, my Masters,
And you, good people all, are ready now,
Then shall the Tournament of Song begin."
At that, came Master Kothner quick and spake:
"All Masters now unmarried, make them ready!
Let him begin who is the eldest of them!

Friend Beckmesser, it is your turn; begin!"
At which Beckmesser left the line of Masters,
Came to the mound and stumbled up uncertain,
And tottered with the cry: "The deuce, how shaky!
Come, make this mound more solid for my feet!"
Whereat the apprentices snickered and laughed out,
And beat the turf most lustily and long;
While many of the people had their jest:
"What! such a wooer, surely not the right one!
Were I the lady, anything but him!
What would his first wife think of these new capers?
He cannot stand straight! Who would walk with him?"
While others cried, suppressing bubbling glee:
"Be still, for he is a most learned Master!
He is the Town-Clerk, Beckmesser his name!
Heavens! he's stupid, see he's stumbling now!
Nay, nay! hold off your levity and wit!
He is a grave and honored counsellor!"
The apprentices drawn up in order shouted:
"Silentium! good folks, silentium!
Let no one speak, or whisper, even hum!"
Beckmesser, anxious, scanned the people's faces
And made at last a solemn bow to Eva
And Kothner, as the clerk cried: "Now, begin!"
So Beckmesser began to sing his lay.
'T was vain attempt to reproduce the words
And air of the new song but just purloined,

That Hans Sachs noted down as Walter sang.
But now the singer spoiled it by his lapses
Of memory and direful deep confusion:

The Master's Song

"THE morn was dight with roseate right,
Rich was her hair with fragrance fair,
And beauteous beaming beyond steaming
A misty garden doth invite!"

The song seemed strange, and faulty was the tune,
But settling on his feet more firmly yet,
He wiped his brow in comical despair,
And peeping at his manuscript, he sang:

"With joyous scold my eyes behold
A wondrous tree of minstrelsy,
Its boughs distending and offending
The flaming suit of growing gold!"

Again he tried to steady his poor limbs
And to correct his stumbling speech as well
By furtive peepings at the manuscript.
The Masters cried: "What says he? Is he mad?
The words he sings are utter foolishness!"
And loud the people cried in mockery:
"Oh, charming wooer! Give him his reward!
His prize is hanging on the gallows-tree!"
Bold in presumption and a wild assurance,
Yet Beckmesser, still more confused, sang on:

"Let me confess
This mirror of a dress!
For standing there, a maid most fair,
With white eyes glowing, hisses blowing,

Leaned on my chest and all confessed,
The lute with capture ripe
The tree of tripe!"

And at such arrant nonsense of a song,
Strange jumble of a poem, empty sense,
The multitude broke forth in peals of mirth,
While Beckmesser descended from the mound
And ran with angry face to good Hans Sachs,
Crying: "Accursèd cobbler, 't is your work!
My friends, this song I sang is not my song,
'T is by Hans Sachs, whom you profess to honor!
Your own Hans Sachs, he gave the song to me!
Methinks the traitor, just to shame me thus,
Palmed off on me his miserable song!"
He spake in wrath and furious rushed away,
Lost in the crowd, confusion everywhere.
The people cried: "What can this mean? O Heavens,
Surprises never cease! That song by Sachs!"
And all amazed the Master-singers asked:
"Explain, Hans Sachs! What shame and scandal this?
Is that your song? How comes this gross deception?"
Hans Sachs stooped down and picked the paper up,
Which Beckmesser in wrath had thrown away,
And spake: "This song does not belong to me.
Friend Beckmesser is wrong. And further wrong,
Because, most gracious Sirs, this song is fine!
One can see that who takes one glance at it!

'T is only that Beckmesser sung it wrong!
But since accused, I must defend myself!
Therefore allow me to call forth a witness!
Is there one here who knows that I am right,
Let him stand forth before this company!"
A moment there was pause and no one stirred.
Then came Sir Walter boldly through the crowd.
Noble his bearing, princely his array,
And as the people stirred Hans Sachs exclaimed:
"Now bear me witness that the song's not mine!
And also prove that what I say of it
Is truly said, and not a word too much!"
Then cried the Masters, grave and doubtfully,
"Ah, good Hans Sachs, subtle and sly you are,
Yet for this once we let you have your way!"
He bowed and answered: "Surely our good rules
Allow a rare exception now and then!"
Loudly the people called: "A noble witness!
Yea, proud and bold,—surely he brings some good."
Spake Sachs: "The Masters and the people both
Agree to hear the witness that I bring!
Walter von Stolzing, sing the song for us!
And you, good Masters, watch if he goes wrong!"
Then to the Guild he gave the manuscript;
While the apprentices were speaking low:
"All are intent and hushed is every hum;
We need not now call out, Silentium!"

And Walter came and mounted up the mound,
And proud and firm he stood and boldly sang
A fairer wording of his earlier song
To tune more glorious than at first he dreamed:

"AT early dawn in rosy bloom,
A mystic garden doth invite,
Full of all pleasures, sweet perfume,
And fair and fond delight.

"And there beneath a mystic tree,
Whose wondrous golden fruits entice,
The fairest woman that may be,—
Eva, in Paradise."

Then for a moment paused he in still thought,
Until the second Strophe he began:

"At twilight in the deepened shades
The Muses' crystal fount I found.
Rough was the path through dells and glades,
Yet high and holy ground.

"One crowned me with a wreath most fair,
Beneath a star-lit laurel-tree;
She came from high Parnassus there,—
The Muse of Poesy!"

And once again he paused and stood in thought,
Then boldly sang the Envoy of the song:

"Most blessed day when gone are dreams
Of founts and trees and fruited gold,
Yet with more heavenly glory gleams
What my fond eyes behold!

"I see all Paradise divine,
Delights most warm and human,
And fountain of the Muses Nine,
Here in one glorious woman!

"To-day my heavenly joys begin;
To-day I sing her radiant eyes!
To-day Parnassus do I win,—
And fairest Paradise!"

Enchanting was the music of the song,—
So fresh, so sweet, so full of Spring and love,
It touched all hearts, it stirred the mighty throng—
By graceful harmonies and depth of feeling;
And his rich voice had thrilled them through and through,
They listened spellbound to his rapturous tone;
And as a master had he touched the heart,
Which added its fair music to his voice.
Scarce had he ended with a wondrous burst
Of melody when all the people shouted:
"Give him the prize! Maiden, bestow the crown!
No one could nobler woo than he has done!"
And all the Masters rose and loudly cried:
"Yea, glorious Singer, thine shall be the crown!
Thy noble song has won the Master-prize!"
While good old Master Pogner spake: "Hans Sachs,
I owe to thee this honor and delight!
Here I renew my life and happiness!"
But the fair Eva, who had eager watched
All things from the begining to the end,
Seeming enthralled by some high noble spell,

Now as she heard the voices of the people,
And the decree of the most learned Masters,
Has seemed to wake. She rose and graciously,
Her face all radiant and like roses red,
Walked to the platform's edge, where on the steps
Knelt Walter, and with smile serene and pure,
Upon his brow she placed the victor's wreath,
Entwined of myrtle and of laurel leaves,
Commingled sign of fame and victory.
As he arose and gazed into her eyes
Most lovingly, she took the hand he proffered
And led him to her father, at whose feet
They knelt most humbly, while above them both
He stretched his hands in gracious benediction.
Then, pointing to the group, spake good Hans Sachs:
"My friends, this gallant witness answered well;
Blame you Hans Sachs for his part here today?"
And all the people jubilantly cried:
"Nay, nay, Hans Sachs, we honor your good thought!
It was your wit and wisdom saved the day!"
Then cried the Master-singers once again:
"Now, Master Pogner, do your duty well!
Grace this young gallant knight with rank of Master!"
And Master Pogner brought a golden chain,
Enriched with three medallions, finely wrought,—

THE CROWNING OF THE MASTER-SINGER

The sign and seal of Master-singer's rank, —
And spake: "Adorned with royal David's face,
Now I receive you in the Masters' Guild!"
And Walter for a moment shrank and said:
"Nay, not a Master-singer, not for me!
Let me be happy without being Master!"
But as the Masters, disconcerted, looked
Toward good Hans Sachs for help, he warmly said,
Grasping young Walter by the hand, and smiling:
"Think kindly of the Master-singers' ways,
And show respect unto the Art they honor.
So heed my words, revere our German Masters,
If you would nurture up a nobler life;
For if their spirit lives among the people,
Though falls the mighty holy Roman Empire,
Yet still upon our home-soil there shall thrive
Our glorious boast, our sacred German Art!"
And all the throng joined in tumultuous praise.
Yet this great sea of sound told but a part
Of all the gratitude which swelled and surged
In two most happy hearts, at last made one.
For Eva took the crown from Walter's head
And placed it on the brow of good Hans Sachs;
Hans Sachs himself received the golden chain
From Pogner's hand, round Walter's neck entwined it.
With great affection and deep gratitude
Walter and Eva leaned on good Hans Sachs,
One on each side, as if his very own,
While Master Pogner bowed in homage deep,
And all the Master-singers stretched their hands

Toward good Hans Sachs, their wisest and their best,
Smiling in admiration and delight.
It was apotheosis of the poet
Who loved the people, and by them was loved.
Hurrahed and danced the young apprentices,
And the whole mighty throng, with gladness swept,
Shouted a thunder of applause and cried:
"Hail, good Hans Sachs! And three times hail! Hans Sachs!
Hail, Nuremberg's old darling, good Hans Sachs!"

THE END

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